



## STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT SECTION 4





## **4.0 STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT**

### **4.1 Introduction**

All employers are under a legal duty to protect the health and safety of their employees. The principle method of achieving this is by carrying out risk assessments.

This section considers the use of risk assessments as a preventative strategy to reduce the potential for stress in the workplace.

A risk assessment is the systematic and careful examination of hazards at work and an evaluation of the risk posed by these hazards, including an evaluation of whether the controls are in place are sufficient to prevent harm.

Stress related hazards that might place employees at risk should be risk assessed in the same way as any physical or biological hazard encountered in the workplace. The risk assessment is an important step in the process and helps you to focus on the important issues.



## 4.2 Suitable and sufficient risk assessment

If you can answer 'yes' to all these questions, then your approach is likely to be considered a suitable and sufficient risk assessment for work related stress.

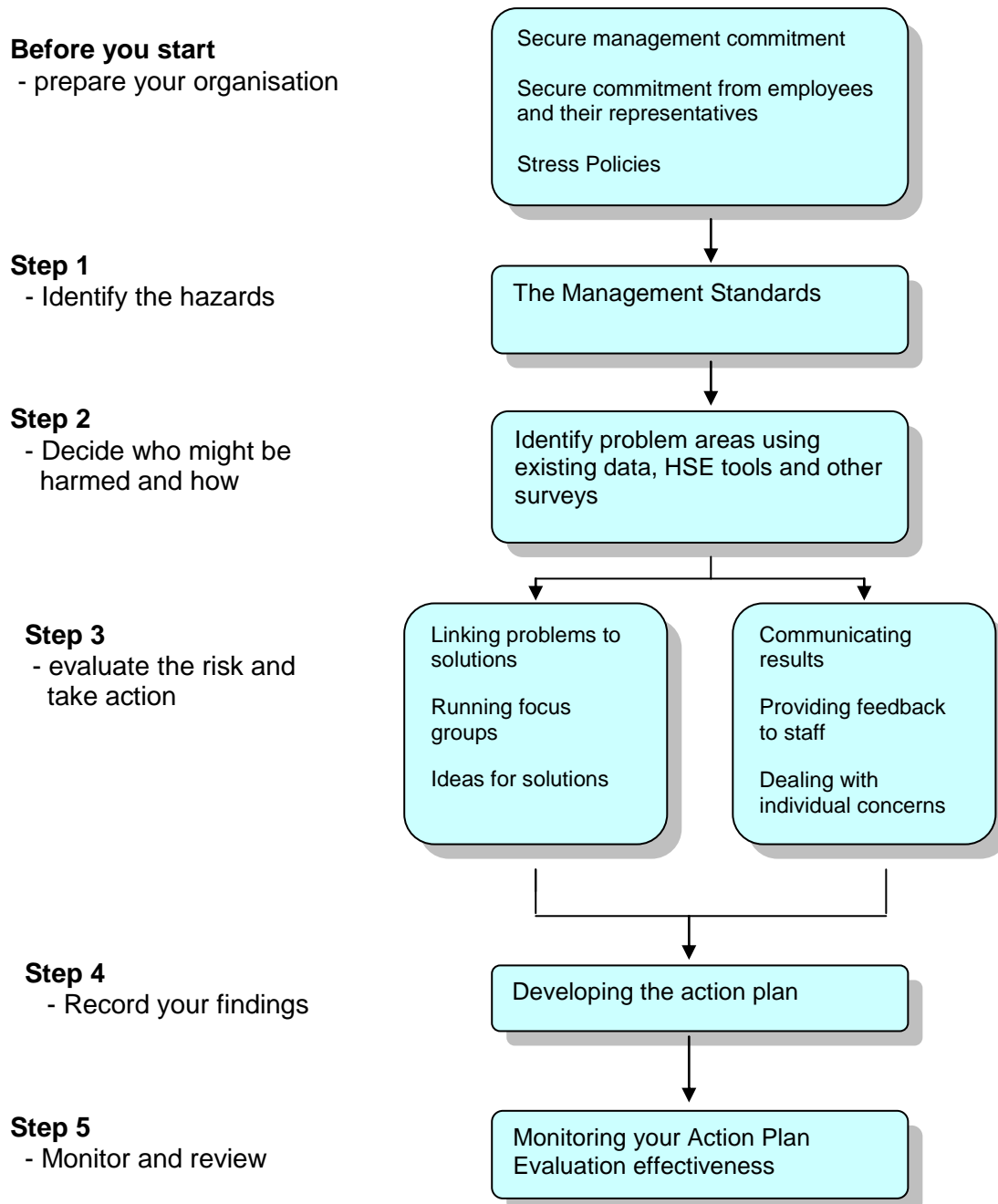
1. Do you include all the steps in the risk assessment process?
2. Do you focus on prevention and organisational level solutions?
3. Do you include provision for dealing with other issues, e.g. individual issues?
4. Do you ensure commitment from all parties (senior management, employees and their representatives)?
5. Do you have arrangements to identify those aspects of the work, organisation or environment that are known to be risk factors for work related stress?
6. Does your approach highlight the extent and nature of the gap, if any, between the current situation, and what is seen as good practice, e.g. 'the states to be achieved' in the Management Standards, for each of the identified stress risk areas?
7. Do you involve the workforce:
  - a. By asking about their views regarding good and bad features of workplace conditions?
  - b. By seeking their suggestions, advice and comments on potential solutions to problems (e.g. improvements to working conditions, changes in the way work is organised, etc)?
  - c. By ensuring that people are empowered to contribute and feel that their views are listened to and acted on?
  - d. By communicating outcomes (e.g. action plans)?
8. Do you seek to develop and adopt solutions that are 'reasonably practicable'?
9. Do you provide documentation to show what you have done at each stage of the process and that you are implementing the recommended actions?

It is important that you document what you have done, whether you follow the Management Standards approach or an alternative approach for example Work Positive, to carrying out a risk assessment for work related stress. Documenting the process you have followed provides an audit trail to help you demonstrate to the relevant inspection authorities that what you have done represents a suitable and sufficient risk assessment.



### 4.3 Risk Assessment process flowchart

HSENI requires every employer to conduct risk assessments for health and safety hazards including work-related stress. HSENI recommends a five-step approach to risk assessment. You can use this overview to track your progress through the Management Standards process.





## 4.4 The Questionnaire

There are a number of tools available to help with Stress Risk Assessment. If you're going to use a survey tool or stress questionnaire, it is very important to use one that has proved to be both reliable (consistent) and valid (fit for purpose). The HSE indicator tool (stress questionnaire) and can be found in **Appendix A** or via the link below. You may wish to incorporate the HSE Management Standards Indicator Tool into your staff satisfaction survey, if so, HSENI would suggest that you keep the question wording and scoring system the same and the items in the same order and use the HSE Management Standards Analysis Tool to analyse your results. This will enable you to compare your results with the HSE benchmark data. You will find it useful to gather other information such as sickness absence data, exit interviews, results from other surveys to help identify any hot spots within your organisation.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/downloads.htm>  
Link to HSE Management Standards – tools and templates

On a practical level here is a check list of things you need to decide before starting the process.

- When is the best time of year to run the survey?
- Decide who is going to carry out the questionnaire on your behalf; is this going to be someone from within your company or an outside agency?
- What format is best for your company – an online survey or hard paper copy?
- How are you going to ensure staff buy in and anonymity when completing the paper version of the questionnaire? What arrangements are you going to put in place for the collection of the completed forms?
- What categories do you want to break the information down to? What will work best for your company eg business unit, grade, length of service, male/female. You need to ensure that this will not identify any individuals.
- Who is going to process the collated information and what will the turnaround time be? You need this information so you can decide when to run your focus groups.



## 4.5 The Analysis Tool

Information can be imported into the analysis tool either electronically or manually. Either way the screen looks like this:-

The screenshot shows a web application window titled "HSE Indicator Tool - Scores Entry". The window contains the following text and form elements:

The coordinator of the risk assessment may have specified that the organisation be categorised to provide meaningful information, e.g. by location, role or department.

If the organisation has been divided into groups for this purpose, please indicate which group(s) you belong to (as advised by the coordinator):

Category A: London

Category B: Management

Category C: Male

Category D: 31-40

Click here to continue with the rest of this questionnaire -->

Select Questions

Delete Last Record   Cat:   1-7   8-14   15-21   22-28   29-35   New Record Number   36   Save New Record

It is recommended that you agree **up to** four category questions for your organisation e.g. number of years service, or work location. You need to be cautious not to categorize in such a way that individuals can be identified.



## Screen shot of the first seven questions

**HSE Indicator Tool - Scores Entry** Page 1

Question 1: I am clear what is expected of me at work  
 Never  Seldom  Sometimes  Often  Always  No Answer

Question 2: I can decide when to take a break  
 Never  Seldom  Sometimes  Often  Always  No Answer

Question 3: Different groups at work demand things from me that are hard to combine  
 Never  Seldom  Sometimes  Often  Always  No Answer

Question 4: I know how to go about getting my job done  
 Never  Seldom  Sometimes  Often  Always  No Answer

Question 5: I am subject to personal harassment in the form of unkind words or behaviour  
 Never  Seldom  Sometimes  Often  Always  No Answer

Question 6: I have unachievable deadlines  
 Never  Seldom  Sometimes  Often  Always  No Answer

Question 7: If work gets difficult, my colleagues will help me  
 Never  Seldom  Sometimes  Often  Always  No Answer

< >

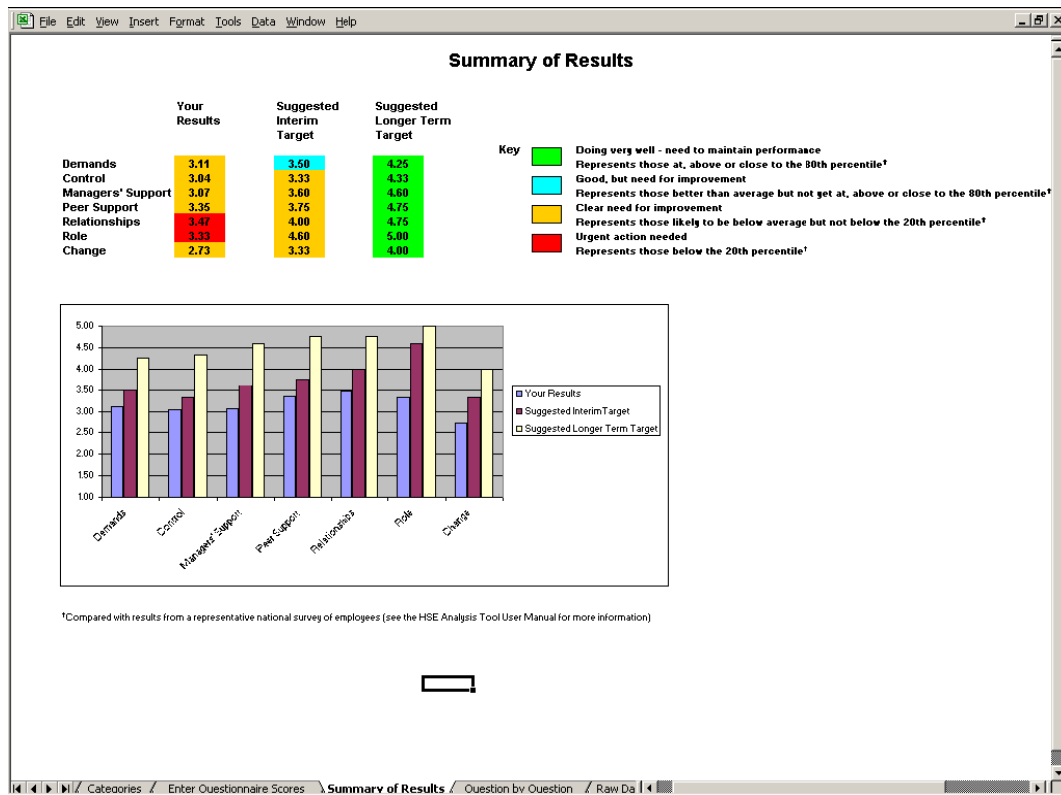
**Select Questions**

Delete Last Record   Cat   1-7   8-14   15-21   22-28   29-35   New Record Number    Save New Record

After all the information has been imported into the analysis tool the results can be interrogated and broken down based on the categories you picked.

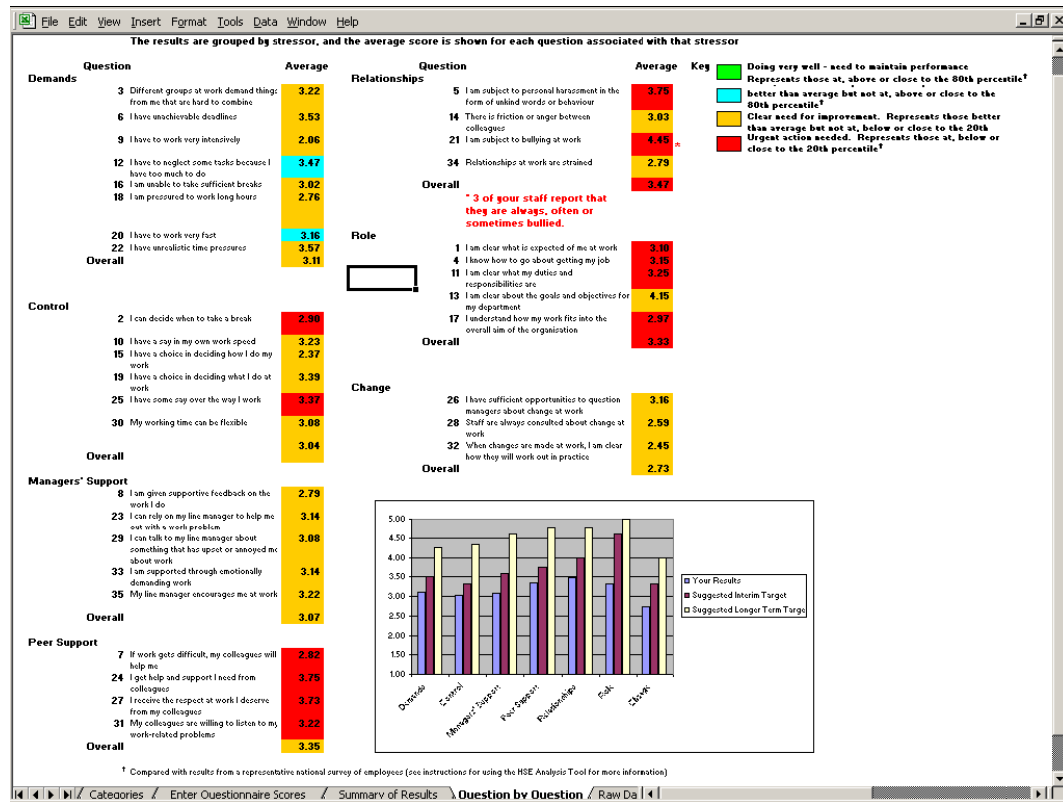


## Screen shot of the summary of overall results page





## Screen shot of the summary of results by question by question page



## 4.6 Taking action after the questionnaire and analysis

A proforma report has been included in **Appendix B** which may be used to write up findings from the questionnaire and analysis. It can also incorporate the focus group write up.

When you have collected the initial information for your risk assessment (Step 2) you should confirm your findings, and explore what this means locally by holding focus groups using a representative sample of your employees. For further information on focus groups please go to **Section 5**.



## 4.7 Appendix A: The Questionnaire

### INDICATOR TOOL FOR WORK RELATED STRESS

(Please tick only ONE Box for each answer)

1.	I am clear what is expected of me at work	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	Often <input type="checkbox"/>	Always <input type="checkbox"/>
2.	I can decide when to take a break	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	Often <input type="checkbox"/>	Always <input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Different groups at work demand things from me that are hard to combine	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	Often <input type="checkbox"/>	Always <input type="checkbox"/>
4.	I know how to go about getting my job done	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	Often <input type="checkbox"/>	Always <input type="checkbox"/>
5.	I am subject to personal harassment in the form of unkind words or behaviour	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	Often <input type="checkbox"/>	Always <input type="checkbox"/>
6.	I have unachievable deadlines	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	Often <input type="checkbox"/>	Always <input type="checkbox"/>
7.	If work gets difficult, my colleagues will help me	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	Often <input type="checkbox"/>	Always <input type="checkbox"/>
8.	I am given supportive feedback on the work I do	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	Often <input type="checkbox"/>	Always <input type="checkbox"/>
9.	I have to work intensively	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	Often <input type="checkbox"/>	Always <input type="checkbox"/>
10.	I have a say in my own work speed	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	Often <input type="checkbox"/>	Always <input type="checkbox"/>
11.	I am clear what my duties and responsibilities are	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	Often <input type="checkbox"/>	Always <input type="checkbox"/>
12.	I have to neglect some tasks because I have too much to do	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	Often <input type="checkbox"/>	Always <input type="checkbox"/>
13.	I am clear about the goals and objectives for my department	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	Often <input type="checkbox"/>	Always <input type="checkbox"/>
14.	There is friction or anger between colleagues	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	Often <input type="checkbox"/>	Always <input type="checkbox"/>



## INDICATOR TOOL FOR WORK RELATED STRESS

(Please tick only ONE Box for each answer)

		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
15.	I have a choice in deciding how I do my work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16.	I am unable to take sufficient breaks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17.	I understand how my work fits into the overall aim of the organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18.	I am pressured to work long hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19.	I have a choice in deciding what I do at work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20.	I have to work very fast	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21.	I am subject to bullying at work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22.	I have unrealistic time pressures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23.	I can rely on my line manager to help me out with a work problem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24.	I get help and support I need from colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25.	I have some say over the way I work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26.	I have sufficient opportunities to question managers about change at work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27.	I receive the respect at work I deserve from my colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28.	Staff are always consulted about change at work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## INDICATOR TOOL FOR WORK RELATED STRESS

(Please tick only ONE Box for each answer)

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
29.	I can talk to my line manager about something that has upset or annoyed me about work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30.	My working time can be flexible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31.	My colleagues are willing to listen to my work related problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32.	When changes are made at work, I am clear how they will work out in practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33.	I am supported through emotionally demanding work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34.	Relationships at work are strained	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
35.	My line manager encourages me at work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Please type your category questions here e.g.**

**Years of service:** Less than 2yrs       2 to 10yrs       greater than 10yrs

**Working pattern:** Full time       Part time

**PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE TO (NAME OF CONTACT HERE)**

**BY : (TYPE DATE OF RETURN HERE)**



## **4.8 Appendix B: Proforma report for stress risk assessment**

### **Report on Implementation of Management Standards for Work Related Stress in insert name of company here**

***Name: insert name here***

***Date:***



## Acknowledgements

Thanks to:

- insert names here
- 
- And all who participated in the process.



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## Executive Summary

Completing the management standards process, of which this report forms part, addresses ***insert name of company here*** legal obligations to managing stress within their organisation. The standards are supported by a risk assessment process which involves several stages. These are – questionnaire, focus groups, reporting, developing an action plan to address issues and finally review.

Key issues emerging from the focus groups included:-

- **list the key issues here**
- 

The information from the focus groups should be considered in conjunction with any other relevant sources of information e.g. information gathered from the management standards questionnaire.

Key issues should be prioritised and reasonably practicable solutions should be identified and agreed by a team including management and staff representatives. The actions which need to be taken with regard to the priority items, when they will be taken and the responsible person tasked with carrying out the action should be recorded.

## Background

Under the *Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978* (as amended) employers have a duty to ensure as far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees. Employers must also assess health and safety risks under the *Management of Health and Safety at Work (NI) Regulations 2000* (as amended). While in the past health and safety management focused on physical wellbeing, it is now recognized that the legislation applies equally to psychological health and wellbeing.

In October 2004, employers' obligations under the 1989 framework Health and Safety Directive (89/391/EEC) for the protection of employee occupational health and safety, was extended to include work-related stress when EU social partners formally signed a framework agreement.

The Health and Safety Executive have developed management standards for work-related stress. Six key aspects of work have been identified which if not properly managed, can lead to excessive pressures in the workplace. These are demands, control, support, relationships, role and change.



## Focus Groups

As part of the process of implementing the Management Standards within Council it was agreed that focus groups should be held. Past experience has shown that this approach allows employees to draw on their own detailed knowledge of local issues and give weight to any findings from the staff survey.

There were focus groups and a number of one to one meetings held between the            and            . A total of            participants attended (approximately            % of staff based on a staff complement of            .

The participants represented a wide range of job types across the companies departments. The participants ranged from insert range here, e.g. Directors, Admin etc.. Each focus group was comprised of staff of similar grades so as to help facilitate open discussion.

Participants were encouraged by the facilitator to explore the six key aspects of work with respect to excessive pressures and potential solutions. After discussion each group settled on a list of key issues which they felt caused excess pressure in the workplace. The participants also suggested potential solutions which they felt could improve working conditions. The key points from all focus groups (and one-to-one meetings) are combined and listed in the report below.

The following pages highlight the main concerns expressed and (where applicable) potential solutions suggested by participants. As the focus groups were required to concentrate on perceived problems, the recorded comments from contributors are negative. However there were many positive comments made, these included:

- **e.g. good terms and conditions**
- 

*The following comments should be balanced in the above context.*



## **Appendices attached**

**Appendix A** – Results collated by from the work related stress survey carried out on behalf of insert name of company here in insert date

**Appendix B** - lists details of initiatives in place in insert name of company here provided by insert name here



## **Combined written comments from the focus groups**

### Demands – Positive comments

Demands includes issues like workload, work patterns and the work environment

- e.g. good pay and conditions
- 
- 

### Demands – Concerns expressed

- 

### Potential solutions suggested

- 1.



Control – Positive comments

Control is about how much say the person has in the way they do their work

- 

Control – Concerns expressed

- 

Potential solutions suggested

2.



Support – Positive comments

Support includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.

- 

Support – Concerns expressed

- 

Potential solutions suggested

3.



Relationships – Positive comments

Relationships includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour

- 

Relationships – Concerns expressed

- 

Potential solutions suggested

4.



Role – Positive comments

Role is about whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles.

•

Role – Concerns expressed

•

Potential solutions suggested

5.



Change – Positive comments

Change is about how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.

•

Change - Concerns expressed

•

Potential solutions suggested

6.



## Conclusion

Completing the management standards process, of which this report forms part, addresses insert name of company here legal obligations to managing stress within their organisation.

Some of the key issues emerging during the focus groups include

- **insert main issues here e.g. work environment**
- 

The information from the focus groups should be considered in conjunction with information gathered from the management standards survey and any other relevant sources of information.

Priority issues should be identified and agreed by management and staff representatives. The actions which need to be taken with regard to the priority items, when they will be taken and the responsible person tasked with carrying out the action should be recorded.



## Appendix A





insert name of person who carried out the survey here carried out a survey (based on HSE indicator tool – a questionnaire on work-related stress) in date:- **January**. The questionnaire was issued to all staff. A total of anonymous questionnaire returns were received which equates to approximately **1 %** of staff (based on 1 staff).

Details of the responses obtained were collated and analysed using the HSE analysis tool. This rates staff perceptions of the six key stress factors. The results of the completed analysis tool indicates which of the generic stressors require further investigation and verification through the use of, various methods including focus group discussions.

The table below summarises the results in the form of a score and colour coding for each of the stress factors. The colour coding and result scores allow an assessment to be made against the scores of organisations responding to the same questions as part of a HSE survey conducted within 136 organisations and is constituted of 'organisational averages'.

The result scores range numerically (5 to 1) and are correspondingly colour coded from green to red. A higher score indicates a better performance and a lower score may indicate a potential problem area.

The reference scores for each question are different so it is the relationship between the number score for insert name of company here and the reference score that determines the colour. The key below indicates how the organisation is performing with respect to the organisational survey.

Key	
	If your result is shown in green then your organisation is performing in the top 20% as measured against the HSE organisational database.
	If your result is in blue then your organisation is performing in the top 51% - 80% range.
	If your result is in amber then your organisation is performing below average in the 21% - 50% range.
	If your result is in red then your organisation is performing below average in the lower 20% range.

The key applies to the summary table on page 1 and the subsequent tables in this report.



***Example*** – insert copy of your results chart here this information is found in the summary of results section of the HSE analysis tool

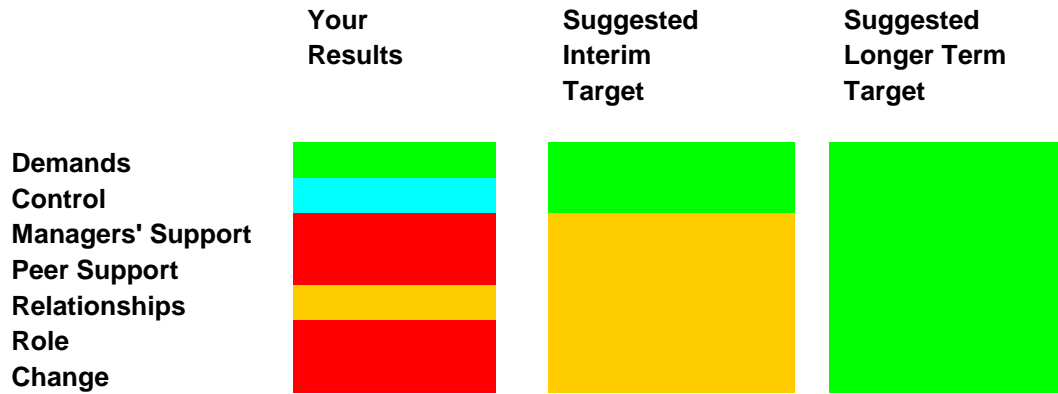


Chart 1 – Overall results for [insert name of company here]

The results can be analysed further by breaking down into any of the various categories you have listed in your analysis tool e.g. length of service, gender, or departments, these charts can be listed in the section above. ***Caution should be exercised when listing categories to ensure that individuals or small groups can not be identified.***



## **Appendix B**

The good practice schemes relating to management and employment practices which insert name of company here have in place are detailed below:-

1. Insert text here