



HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT STANDARDS SECTION 3





3.1 HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

Before you start

The Health and Safety Executive in Great Britain have developed management standards as the key to managing work-related stress risks. They have defined stress as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them at work”

The Management Standards for work-related stress describe a set of conditions that reflect high levels of health, well-being and organisational performance.

HSE's management standards are one way to manage work-related stress risks.

The management standards encourage good management practice and the contribution of all employees. Following this advice will enable you to identify the gap between what is happening in your organisation and these ideal conditions.

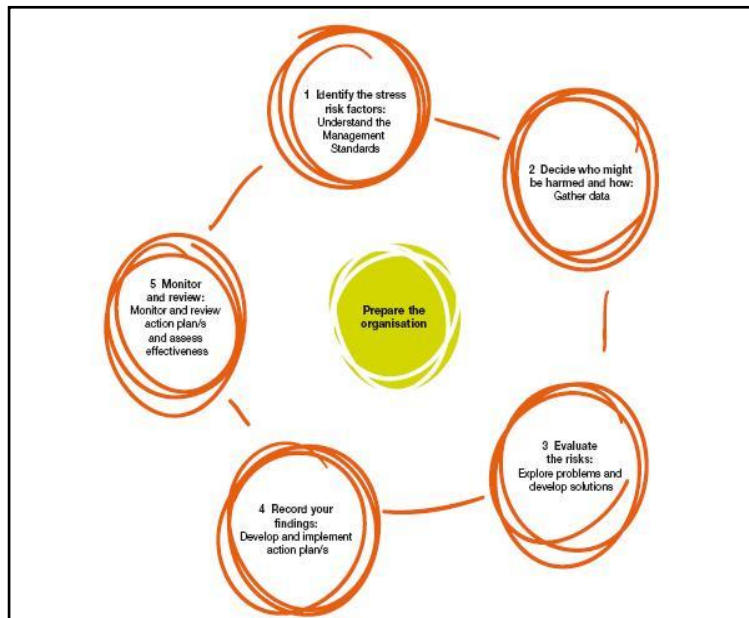
Commitment from both management and staff is crucial for implementing the management standards effectively. Good project planning, communication and staff time are required. Steering groups or health and safety committees have proven useful for selecting issues and helping with the on-the ground implementation.

The Management Standards are based on a risk assessment approach. The first step is to identify the hazards, then decide who might be harmed, evaluate the risk and take action, record your findings and finally monitor and review.

With work-related stress these steps can often be uncertain or uncoordinated. By fully implementing the management standards your organisation will have assessed the risks of work-related stress and minimised the causes.

Whilst on the face of it the standards may seem to be another administrative burden, for the most part, it should be a matter of adjusting existing procedures, systems or practices to take the issue of work-related stress into consideration.

(See section 1 for further information on the business case and section 2 for further information on stress policies.) See www.hse.gov.uk for further information

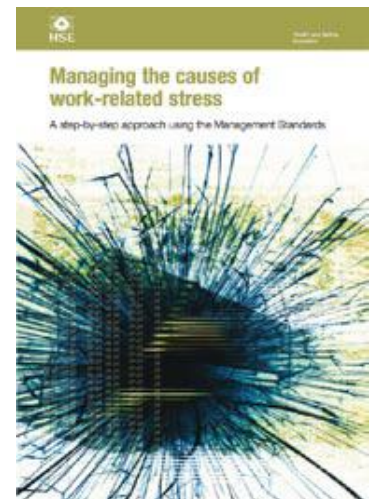


Step 1: Identify the hazards

HSE have carried out the first step of the risk assessment by identifying the hazards.

They have identified six key aspects of work which if not properly managed, can lead to work-related stress.

These are demands, control, support, relationships, role and change. Each hazard has a management standard associated with it and they are not complicated or complex. They are simple statements that define good management practice as it relates to each stressor area.



Demands include issues like workload, work patterns and the work environment. The management standard is that employees indicate that they are able to cope with the demands of their job and systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

The standards have also identified the states to be achieved with respect to these key aspects.

Demands on the individual are often quoted as the main cause of work-related stress. These are the states to be achieved regarding demands. Including having adequate and achievable demands, matching skills and capabilities and addressing concerns about the environment.



There are examples where organisations have looked at patterns of demand and match capacity to meet busy times.

Control involves how much say the person has in the way they do their work. The standard is that employees indicate that they are able to have a say about the way they do their work and systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns. These are the states to be achieved regarding control.

Research suggests that when there are greater opportunities for participating in decision making, greater satisfaction and higher feelings of self-esteem are reported. The states to be achieved under control include where possible employees having control over their pace of work, being able to use their skills and develop. And being consulted regarding breaks and work patterns.

An example is to structure work in a way which allows staff to see a task through from start to finish.

Support includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues. The standard is that employees indicate that they receive adequate information and support from their colleagues and supervisors and that systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

Other people can be important sources of support, but they can also be sources of stress.

Studies have found that low social support at work is associated with poor mental health, poor health and increased sickness absence. [1] (2002) Ill-Health – Work Environment, Alcohol Consumption and Ill-Health: The Whitehall II Study. Health and Safety Executive Contract Research Report 422/2002, Sudbury, HSE Books.

Some of the things required are systems to be in place and accessible to allow staff to be supported.

Relationships includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour. The standard is that employees indicate that they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours e.g. bullying at work and systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

There are two particular aspects of relationships that are associated with work-related stress – bullying and harassment. States to be achieved regarding relationships include having procedures to prevent or deal with unacceptable behaviour and to report it.

Role deals with whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles. The standard is that employees indicate that they understand their role and responsibilities and there are systems in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

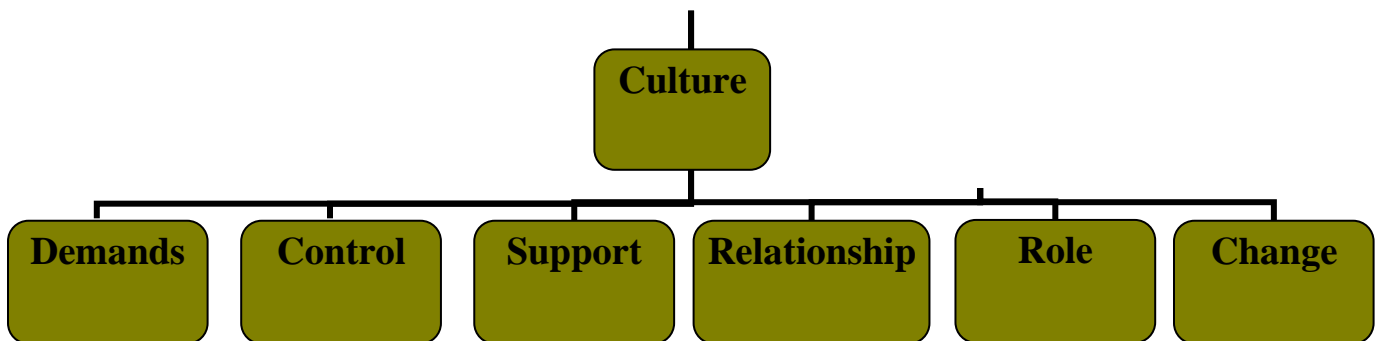


There are two potentially stressful areas associated with an employee's role. They are role conflict and role ambiguity. Conflict includes having differing demands or doing things which the employee does not believe are part of their job. To prevent role ambiguity employees should have a clear picture about work objectives, colleague's expectations and the scope of their responsibilities.

Change includes how organisational change (whether large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation. The standard is that employees indicate that the organisation engages them frequently when undergoing an organisational change and systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening regarding change?

Among other things an organisation should allow adequate employee consultation, make employees aware of time scales and give necessary support.





Step 2: Who might be harmed?

The next step is to identify who might be harmed. The questionnaire is a risk assessment tool which investigates the presence or absence of known organisational stressors. The 35 questions rate employees perceptions of the six key aspects from demands through to change. These questionnaires should be issued to all staff anonymously. The success of the initiative is based on having as wide a response as possible. It provides an overall anonymous organisation result. It does not provide results of individual well-being. HSE advise that a response rate of 50% can be considered adequate.

These results are only one source of information. They need to be considered alongside data from a variety of sources which might indicate problem areas e.g. sick absence rates, employee turnover or exit interviews.

(See section 4 for further information on risk assessments)

Step 3: Evaluate the risk

Details of the responses obtained from the questionnaire can then be analysed using an Analysis Tool programme.

Key stressor	Your Results
Demands	Upper 20 Percent
Control	Above average
Managers' support	Lower 20 percent
Peer support	Lower 20 percent
Relationships	Lower 20 percent
Role	Above average
Change	Below average

This is a summary of the data in graphical form. Both the analysis tool programme and the user manual download are provided free of charge and without copyright on the HSE web site.

There are several methods of displaying information. The table rates employees' perceptions of the six stress factors using a colour coding system. The colour coding identifies hot spots and helps organisations recognize priority areas for improvement. The results obtained indicated that this company are performing satisfactorily in the areas of control and managers' support.

They have an urgent need for action regarding role and they have a need for improvement in the areas of relationships, demands, peer support and change. HSE recommend that these results are seen as a general appraisal rather than the definitive result. Other data which may be considered includes sickness absence data,



productivity data, exit/return to work interviews, performance appraisals and informal talks.

The questionnaire results provide a skeleton of information and focus groups put meat on the bones. Focus groups are normally a 2 hour meeting of staff of similar backgrounds.

Focus groups are an excellent method of consulting with staff and obtaining their views. Staff should be encouraged to participate and have an open honest discussion to get to the root of any issues. The staff participating should represent all job types and a full range of grades. It is better to have similar grades and similar job types together at a focus group.

The facilitator should be impartial and be able to reassure the group that all information will be kept anonymous. Each focus group will note what they see as the main issues of concern and potential solutions. Any individual concerns e.g. a report of bullying need to be dealt with individually.

Information on running focus groups is available in section 5 – Focus Groups.

Step 4: Record findings and developing an action plan

It has been found useful to communicate the results of the questionnaire during the focus group sessions and then to combine the suggestions from all the focus groups to form the basis of an Action Plan.

It is often not possible to address all issues immediately and therefore items need to be selected for prioritisation and agreed with senior management and union representatives. Issues may be prioritised because they are of a serious nature, they affect the majority of staff or affect groups most of the time.

Many companies are already doing more than they realise to tackle stress simply by managing staff well.

Solutions based on a clear understanding of a problem are going to be the most effective. It has been found that the most effective improvements have been based on consultations with staff. As staff have participated they are then committed to seeing the solutions put in place.

A number of examples are documented in HSE's Real Solutions Real People and also in the Work Positive resource pack and various websites including www.hse.gov.uk and www.hseni.gov.uk.

A champion or often a steering group can recommend possible interventions, prioritise actions and plan the on-the-ground implementation. Some of the things this group will consider include:

- Can the organisation tackle the source of this problem?



- What are the options?
- How workable is this option?
- What are the costs/benefits of this option?
- What are the advantages of this option?

There are three levels of intervention for dealing with workplace stress:

1. The first is Primary interventions. These are aimed at eliminating or modifying workplace stressors to reduce their negative impact on all individuals in the organisation. Systems and mechanisms to prevent stress arising in the first place are normally based on good management methods. These can include job redesign or work-life balance policies. Interventions should be focussed on stress factors that can be controlled at the organisational level.
2. Secondary interventions focus on increasing the awareness and coping skills of the individual e.g. stress management training and health promotion activities.
3. Tertiary interventions are concerned with the treatment and rehabilitation of distressed individuals e.g. counselling or return to work policies.

(See sections 6, 7 & 8 for further information on action plans, interventions and HR implications respectively.)

Step 5: Monitor and review

Regular reviewing is required to check that the action plan has been put in place and is effective. Reviewing will also pick up if the stressors have changed and if the action plan needs to be amended.

The management standards encourage continuous improvement.

Conclusion

In conclusion stress is a serious problem for both the individual and the organisation.

For organisations to avoid risk and be employers of choice they must identify and mitigate the causes of stress. It can be a challenging subject to tackle. However the stress management standards and the stress analysis indicator tool provide a means of measuring the impact of stress and standards to aim for.

There are solutions which have been tried and tested in individual case studies. Real Solutions Real People has examples from many sectors. It gives case studies that have resulted in improved efficiency, improved staff morale and reduced sickness absence rates which brought considerable savings.

Management of work related stress is a complex problem and therefore a long term commitment is required.



Making the stress Management Standards work

How to apply the Standards in your workplace





Is Stress A Reportable Industrial Injury Under Reporting Of Injuries, Diseases And Dangerous Occurrences Regulations?

No. Stress was not included as a RIDDOR reportable disease under the current regulations. This is because the causes of stress-related ill-health are usually extremely complex and linking conditions to specific types of work activity (as is done for other diseases and conditions in RIDDOR) would be difficult.





3.2 A Training Presentation on the Management Standards Process

Management standards for work-related stress

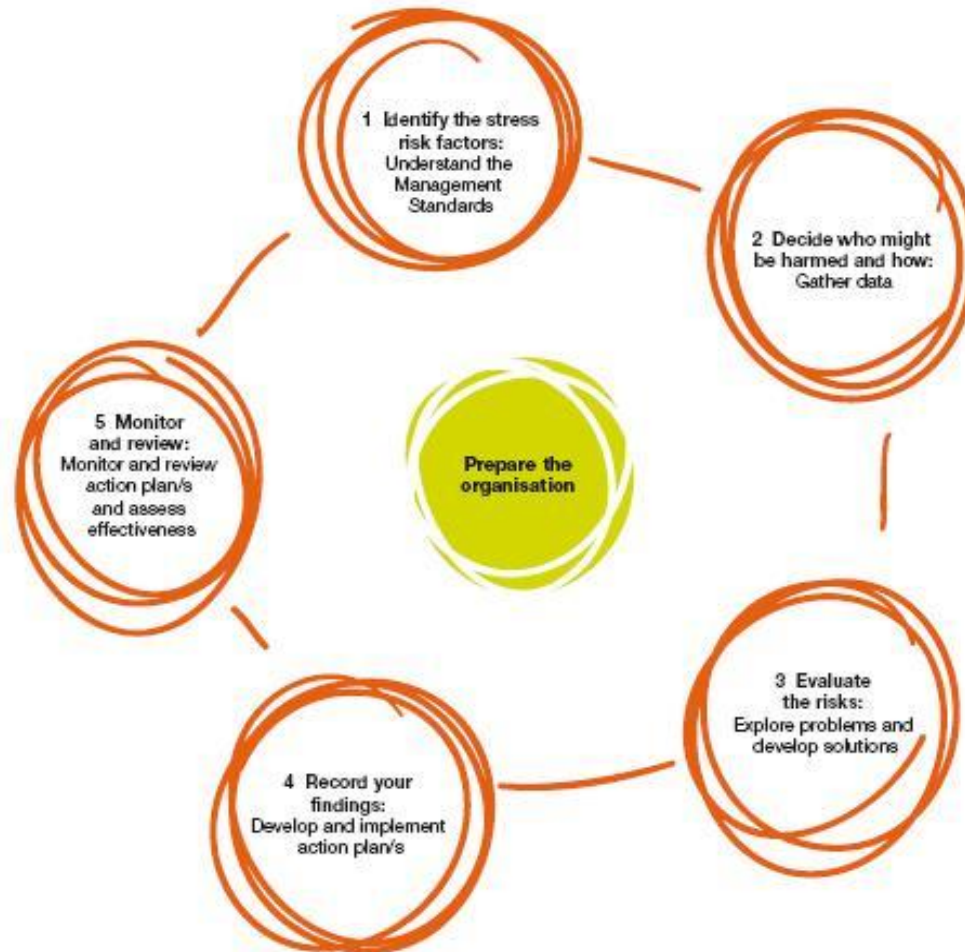


Outline

- Before you start
- The hazards (what is work-related stress?)
- Who might be harmed
- Evaluate the risk (data and staff engagement)
- Develop an action plan
- Monitor and review



Stress - 5 step risk assessment process



Before you start

The management standards approach:
Encourages organisations to take
reasonable steps towards improving
their workplace

Requires resources especially
communication but also commitment
from management, employees and
union/representatives

(See sections 1 for the business case
slides & 2 for further information on
stress policies)



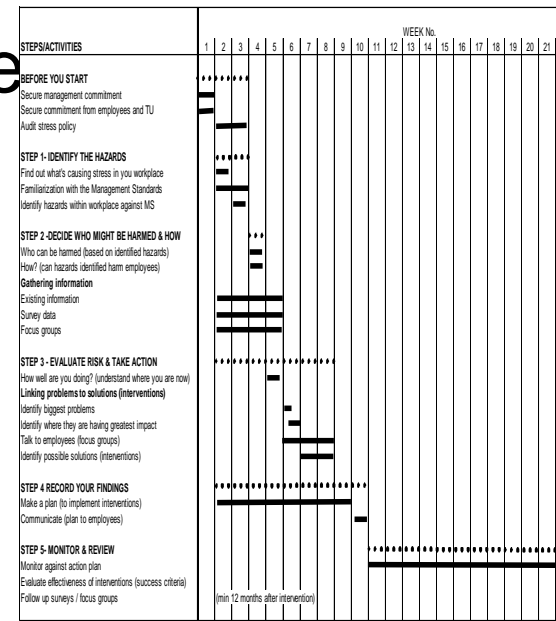
Making the stress
Management Standards work
How to apply the Standards in your workplace



Before you start

Consider steering group health and safety committee or health promotion group to oversee implementation of management standards, for:

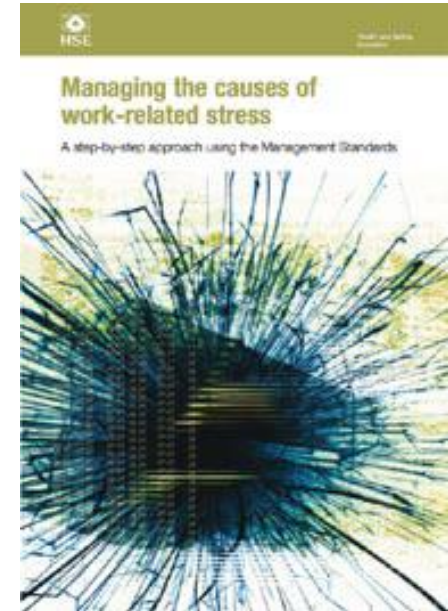
- Generation and approval of action plans
- Project management, planning
- Resources: time, experience, finance
- Communications
- Monitor progress: schedule, budget



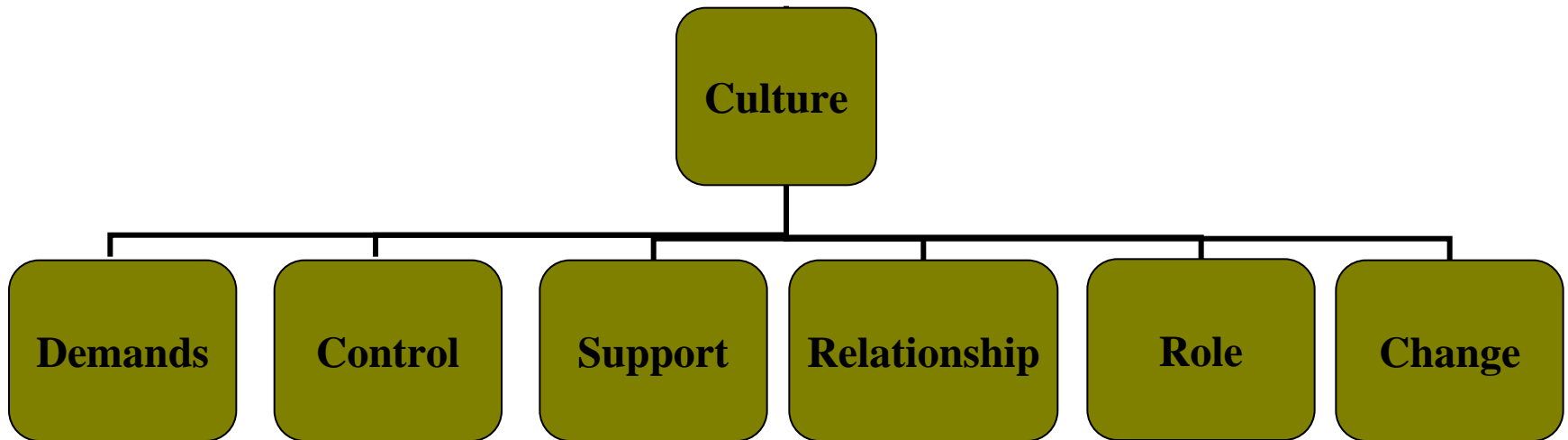
Before you start

**What is Work-Related Stress?
"The adverse reaction people
have to excessive pressures or
other types of demand placed
on them at work "**

(HSE, 2010)



Step 1: Identify the hazards - The HSE management standards



Step 1: Identify the hazards - The HSE management standards

- **Demands**: Includes issues like workload, work patterns and the work environment.
- **Control**: How much say a person has in the way they do their work.
- **Support**: Includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.



Step 1: Identify the hazards - The HSE management standards

- **Relationships**: Includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- **Role**: Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles.
- **Change**: How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.



Step 2 Who might be harmed?

- HSE Questionnaire (or equivalent)
- 35 questions relating to 6 stressors
- Issued to all staff anonymously

(See section 4 for further information on risk assessments)

21 I am subject to bullying at work	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	Often <input type="checkbox"/>	Always <input type="checkbox"/>
22 I have unrealistic time pressures	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	Often <input type="checkbox"/>	Always <input type="checkbox"/>
23 I can rely on my line manager to help me out with a work problem	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	Often <input type="checkbox"/>	Always <input type="checkbox"/>
24 I get help and support I need from colleagues	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>
25 I have some say over the way I work	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>
26 I have sufficient opportunities to question managers about change at work	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>
27 I receive the respect at work I deserve from my colleagues	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>
28 Staff are always consulted about change at work	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>
29 I can talk to my line manager about something that has upset or annoyed me about work	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>
30 My working time can be flexible	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>
31 My colleagues are willing to listen to my work-related problems	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>
32 When changes are made at work, I am clear how they will work out in practice	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>
33 I am supported through emotionally demanding work	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>
34 Relationships at work are strained	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>
35 My line manager encourages me at work	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.



Step 3 Evaluate the risks analysis of data

- Analyse survey results using Excel based HSE analysis tool
- Consider other data (e.g. sickness absence data, productivity data, exit/return to work interviews, performance appraisals, informal talks)







Step 3 Evaluate the risks analysis of data

Example of analysis tool results

<u>Key stressor</u>	<u>Your Results</u>
Demands	Upper 20 Percent
Control	Above average
Managers' support	Lower 20 percent
Peer support	Lower 20 percent
Relationships	Lower 20 percent
Role	Above average
Change	Below average

Key:

	Doing very well - need to maintain performance
	Good, but need for improvement
	Clear need for improvement
	Urgent action needed

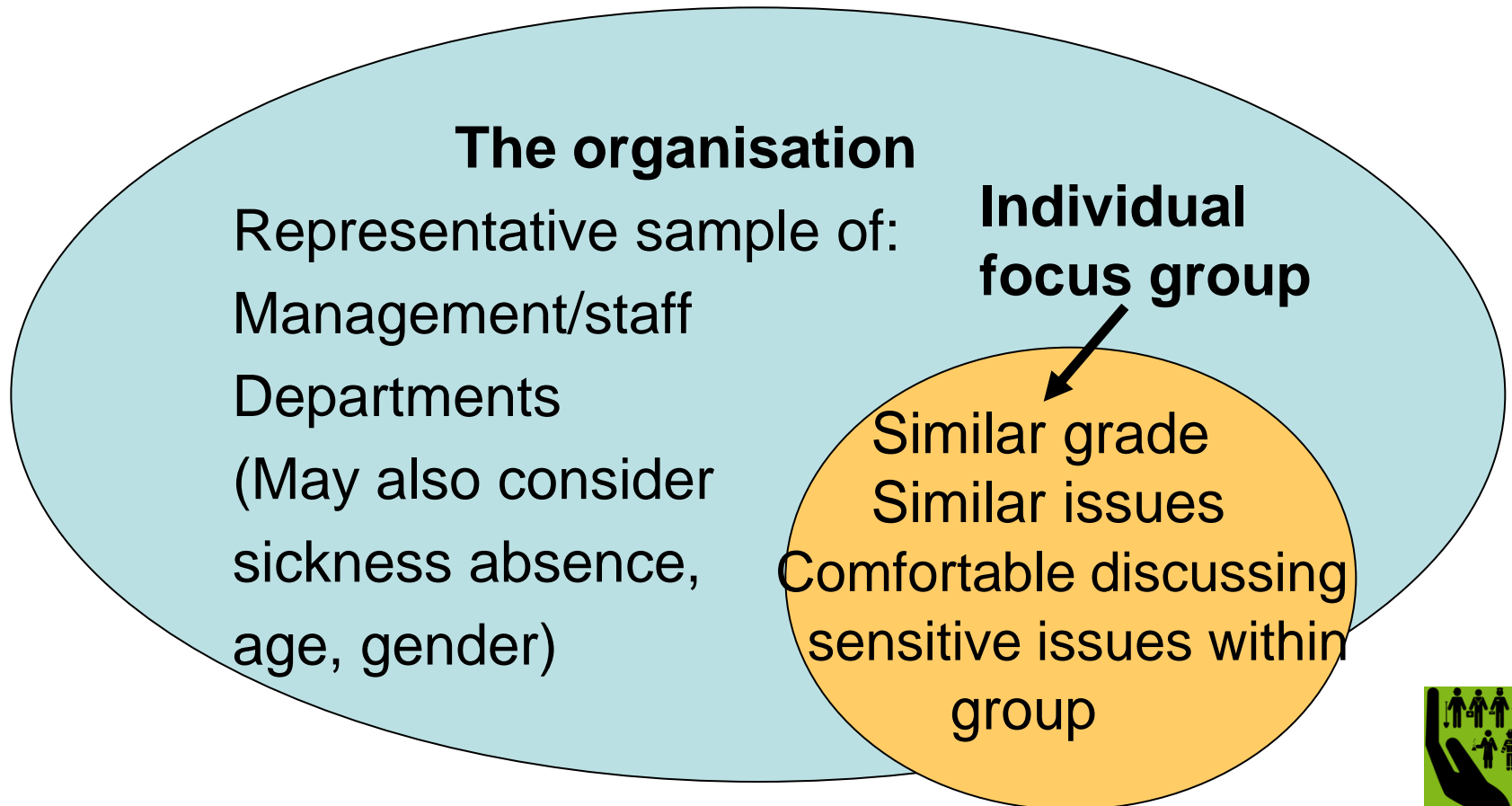


Step 3: Evaluate the risks – staff focus groups

- Engage with (randomly selected) staff through an impartial facilitator
- Groups with similar issues/grades
- Confirm/challenge results of Indicator Tool
- Note main issues of concern (and discussions)
- Discuss practical improvements/interventions
- Deal with individual concerns
(See section 5 for further information on focus groups)



Step 3: Evaluate the risks – staff focus groups



Step 4 Record your findings & implement action plan

Link problems to solutions - gap analysis, develop and implement adequate prioritised action plans

(See sections 6 & 7 for further information on action plans and interventions)

Health and Safety Executive Management Standards for Tackling Work Related Stress							
Action plan template							
Standard area	Desired state	Current state	Practical solutions	Who will take the work forward?	When?	How will staff receive feedback?	Action completed?



Step 4 Record your findings & implement action plan

Prioritise

- Address what affects most people most of the time (whole organisation or team/ department?)
- Address serious issues
- Early action

Requires steering group/champion to drive forward

Implement stress policy

Reasons for not actioning issues also communicated



Step 4 Record your findings & implement action plan

Primary interventions (prevention focused):

- Flexible work/ improved work life balance
- Changes in work organisation
- Risk assessments/stress audits

Secondary interventions (resilience focused):

- Stress management training
- Systems for employees to raise concerns

Tertiary interventions (individual support):

- Employee assistance programmes/counselling
- Greater involvement of occupational health specialist



Step 5 Monitor and review:

- Action plans and assessment of effectiveness (the outcome is the key not the process)
- Inform employees regularly of progress.

(See section 8 for further information on HR implications)

