

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 This document outlines the policy for the prevention and management of stress at work in for London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.
- 1.2 The School is committed to maintaining the health and safety of its employees in the work environment. The School recognises that this duty of care extends to psychological health as well as physical health. Employees also have a duty of care to report aspects of work that may affect their health and safety as required by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The School and its employees have a responsibility to identify and manage work related stress by working in partnership.
- 1.3 The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999) imposes a duty on employers to make a suitable and sufficient risk assessment. This duty extends to psychological risks to health and is a statutory duty for all employers.
- 1.4 All employees within the School may be exposed to stress. Non-work related stress issues can combine with work related stress to produce pressures which can be detrimental to the physical and/or mental wellbeing of employees and to the smooth running of the School.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 The Health and Safety Executive defines stress as: "A reaction people have when excessive pressures or demands are placed upon them, and arises when an individual believes they are unable to cope" The common term for these pressures or demands is "stressors" and a person's reactions to stressors are termed "stress responses."
- 2.2 Pressure is part and parcel of all works and helps keep us motivated. But excessive stressors particularly over a period of time can lead to stress which undermines performance and can become detrimental to health. It is important to remember that reaction to stress is a very individual experience. Individual stress can be influenced by our own beliefs, attitudes and unrealistic expectations of others. Individual reaction to stressful situations may also be influenced by our conditioning, cultural background, education, life experiences, states of health and personality type.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1 This policy applies to all employees of the School and all those carrying out duties on behalf of the School.

4. ACCESS TO THE POLICY

- 4.1 All employees are entitled to access to this policy which is located on the School's Intranet. Copies are also available from the Human Resources Department and any employee can seek guidance from line management, their trade union representative or the Human Resources Department.

5. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 5.1. To work in partnership with employees and the Trade Union Representatives to develop working practices that reduce the factors that may lead to stress in the workplace and to ensure that appropriate risk assessments are undertaken so as to reduce and control the risk of stress. These risk assessments will be regularly reviewed in particular during periods of organisational change and changes in work demands.

- Monitor the effectiveness of measures to address stress by collating statistical sickness absence evidence;
- Provide, in conjunction with the Occupational Health Services, continuing support to managers and employees in a changing environment and encourage access to counselling and other support services as appropriate;
- Keep the provisions within this policy in line with employment legislation and best practice people management principles.

6.4 The responsibilities of the Health and Safety Committee are to:

- Contribute to arrangements to ensure this policy is implemented across the School;
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of measures to reduce stress at work;
- Contribute to the provision of information to the Senior Management Team, regarding the implementation, efficacy of this policy and the measures in place within the school to reduce and manage work related stress

6.5 The responsibilities of the Occupational Health Department are to:

- Provide specialist advice and training as required including training on stress awareness in self and others;
- Contribute to training and support of managers in the implementation of the stress management standards;
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- Work in partnership with management to ensure that the general principles of this policy are adhered to;
- Be involved in the risk assessment process when applying the stress management standards;
- Be allowed access to statistical and anonymous data concerning stress related issues;
- Attend training and updates as required by the School in order to raise personal awareness and contribute to the development and implementation of this policy.

6.9 Managers, the HR department and trade union representatives are responsible for

meetings, sickness absence rates, and general morale. This may also be considered when initiating new work processes.

Individual risk assessments should be completed (Appendix 6) where an individual reports work-related stress. This assessment may be completed with the individual with the support of the line manager or by Occupational Health.

Where there are cases of work-related stress in a department this should also act as a trigger for the completion of a departmental risk assessment identified in Appendix 7. Occupational Health should also be notified as they may advise further assessment using the HSE on-line assessment tool. The process for management action is summarised in Appendix 4.

9. PROCESS FOR IDENTIFYING AND MANAGING STRESS RELATED ILLNESS

- 9.1 Stress related illnesses can be managed from three perspectives, by way of organisational, managerial and/or personal self-management (see Appendix 3).
- 9.2 When carrying out a risk assessment management and employees can identify any work related stress using the non-exhaustive list of stressors at Appendix 2.
- 9.3 Once a stress related illness has been identified, it is important that managers, employees and all those carrying out duties on behalf of the School which could include normal day to day responsibilities.
- 9.4 As stress is an individual response to a perceived pressure people will have different coping thresholds and it can be difficult to predict who is likely to suffer with stress. A further complication is that people have different coping thresholds depending on other circumstances in their lives. It should therefore be remembered that stress can be accumulative and is not necessarily predictable.
- 9.5 Good management techniques should alert managers to changes in their employees, such as, personality changes, performance etc. that may indicate that an individual is unable to cope with the workload. However some people will not display overt signs and managers cannot always predict when someone is stressed. Often the first indication is when an episode of sickness occurs with stress/anxiety or depression on the certificate. Once alerted to a potential issue, managers should immediately discuss this with the employee concerned and complete a referral to Occupational Health for ongoing support. Referral forms can be found on the School's intranet.
- 9.6 If an individual feels they are experiencing work-related stress they should report to their manager, if appropriate, in order that a referral is made to Occupational Health and an individual risk assessment is carried out.
- 9.7 Individuals can also seek confidential advice on the management of work-related stress from Occupational Health. The Health and Safety Executive has extensive information on their web site on work-related stress which can be found at www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards

10. MONITORING

- 10.1 Once a risk assessment has been undertaken and the outcomes implemented a review date should be set. If issues are still ongoing the Human Resources or Occupational Health department should be contacted for further advice.

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1** The HSE Management Standards For Work Related Stress
- Appendix 2** Five Steps To Risk Assessment Related To Work Related Stress
- Appendix 3** Suggested Ways To Try To Reduce The Effects Of Workplace Pressures
And Demands
- Appendix 4** Overview for Managers
- Appendix 5** Overview for Staff
- Appendix 6** Individual Risk Assessment Form
- Appendix 7** Department/Team Risk Assessment Form

THE HSE MANAGEMENT STANDARDS FOR WORK RELATED STRESS STATES:

Demands

The standard is that:

- employees indicate that they are able to cope with the demands of their jobs;
and
- systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

Control

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.

Support

The standard is that:

- employees indicate that they receive adequate information and support from their colleagues and superiors; and
- systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

Relationships

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.

Role

The standard is that:

- employees indicate that they understand their role and responsibilities; and
- systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

Change

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

- Unsociable work hours and shift working
- Dealing with death and major trauma (including breaking bad news)
- Attending external events as a witness

Non- work based

- Personal stress events at home (e.g. divorce or bereavement)
- Change in living conditions (e.g. moving house)
- Social isolation (e.g. lack of friends)
- Low level support at home
- Long distance commuting
- Sudden change to health
- Conflicting demands of work and home
- Problems caused by both partners following their careers
- Family care responsibilities and pressures
- Financial pressures

Step 3 – Implement the control measures

Having identified potential areas of harm, the next step is to identify who is at risk and find ways of reducing the risk. Control measures will vary depending on the risk identified. Examples might include:

- Ensure all staff have access to information/training on work related stress.
- Ensure staff have clear job descriptions and understand their role.
- Have a system of setting objectives that are achievable and monitor performance.
- Involve staff in the decision making process where possible.
- Identify any training needs and ensure training takes place.
- Where high pressure tasks or repetitive work are identified, consider job rotation.
- Consider flexible working options.
- Offer training or support in coping mechanisms.

Step 4 – Record your findings

Develop and implement the action plan. This may include prioritising, setting goals to work towards, demonstrating the School's commitment to address staff concerns. An action plan should include;

- What the problem is
- How the problem was identified
- What the School is going to do in response
- How the School arrived at this solution
- Who is responsible for delivery of action plan
- Review date/milestones
- Method of feedback to staff

Step 5 – Monitor and Review

Monitor the control measures put in place and revise them as necessary. Review the risk assessment when changes in staffing or process occur. Ensure accurate records are kept.

SUGGESTED WAYS TO TRY TO REDUCE THE EFFECTS OF WORKPLACE PRESSURES AND DEMANDS

Organisational Approach

- Work towards improving communication to all levels of staff, so that individuals will be more informed of forthcoming changes and those which have already taken place.
- All individuals should play their part in disseminating information and knowledge which in turn should assist in improving communication.
- Ensure that risk assessments include the potential risks to individuals of "work" related stress.
- Provide training and support to allow individuals to be able to understand their role and cope with their responsibilities.
- Aim to manage existing staff levels appropriately, in a fair and equitable manner, whilst observing the need to meet service demands.
- Acknowledge that individuals are different and respond to stress differently. The School will be sympathetic and supportive to individuals who are having difficulty in coping, and to not foster a culture which links inability to cope with failure.
- Enable that support is provided to individuals following stressful work incidents.
- Enable individuals to report to their line manager or Occupational Health Services (OH) if they are finding their workplace stressful. Individuals under stress are often worst placed to recognise stress in themselves and to do something about it. Managers and colleagues should feel able to gently prompt people if they feel someone is suffering as a result of stress from whatever source.
- Enable individuals to know they can access initial confidential consultations with the OHS, or seek advice from the Human Resources Department, a trade union representative. This can be done directly by the individual themselves or via a Manager, to discuss any problems whether work related or personal. If necessary referral can be made to an external counsellor.

Managerial Approach

- Enable support/supervision sessions that allow two way communications between manager and individual and from which information and/or indicators in respect of any work related stress issues should be addressed.
- Ensure that stress at work issues are understood and taken seriously.
- Discuss and agree the most appropriate pathway to progress the issue, i.e. OHS, Dignity at Work, or other relevant School policies.
- Keep in regular contact through agreement with the staff in particular if it is a long term absence. If the issue has resulted in absence from work, an appropriate level of mutually acceptable contact should be discussed.


- Whenever appropriate, hold meetings to try to resolve individual issues as soon as there is an awareness that they may cause stress related health issues among individuals.
- Involving individuals when changes to jobs/work environments are taking place and ensuring that training is adequate to maintain the individual's competence to perform.
- Taking action to reduce any uncertainty in respect of changes and job security through prompt and open communications systems.
- Give credit for a job well done!
- Discuss a rehabilitation plan with Occupational Health. It may be necessary to alter hours or duties for a short period on the person's return to work or consider suitable alternative duties for a period of time.
- Where appropriate, meet with the person before their return to work to ensure any workplace stressors are identified.
- Review the stress risk assessment and review if any additional control measures are required.

Individual Approach


- Acknowledge and try to identify the causes of the stress.
- Talk to colleagues, friends or family about how you are feeling. They may be able to give you a different perspective on how to tackle your problems.
- Seek professional help if you feel out of control.
- Manage your time effectively. Try to prioritise work. Make time to think about this. Celebrate your successes.
- Be assertive and learn to say no if you cannot cope.
- Take advantage of training opportunities to extend your knowledge and skills for personal and professional development.
- Learn to delegate. Try not to control every aspect of work processes – this can be stressful to both you and other work colleagues.
- Take care of your physical health. Exercise even for half an hour each day can have significant benefits to both physical and mental health. You do not have to join a gym!
- Walking, cycling or swimming are all very effective and convenient ways of taking regular exercise.
- Avoid depending on caffeine, alcohol, cigarettes or other stimulants to get you through the day. They can often make stress symptoms much worse.
- Enjoy your time away from work. Make time for activities you enjoy and which you find relaxing. Plan regular treats to give yourself something to look forward to.

OVERVIEW FOR MANAGERS

Employee approaches you complaining of stress at work OR Employee is absent due to stress at work



If employee is currently at work, arrange to meet with member of staff to discuss work related concerns, Talk to Human Resources for guidance on how to structure the meeting and discuss a referral to OH.



Individual Work Related Stress Risk Assessment Form

The following Individual Work Related Stress Risk Assessment Form has been developed in line with these Management Standards

	Question	Yes	No	If yes, please provide further details	Provisional actions discussed	Agreed Actions and who is responsible for taking action	Date Completed
1	<p>Demands</p> <p><i>Work pressures – high</i></p> <p>Are your deadlines within role unachievable?</p> <p>Are you required to work long hours?</p> <p>Are your time pressures unrealistic?</p> <p>Are you subject to work demands from different groups that are hard to combine?</p> <p><i>Work pressures low</i></p> <p>Is your work boring, monotonous or unchallenging?</p> <p>nTD -275l.0002 Tc [(Sta)-7.77sponsible</p>						

6	<p>Change</p> <p>Are you consulted/updated about changes at work that affect you?</p> <p>Are you clear about how the change will affect you in practice?</p> <p>Is there adequate consultation about workplace issues/changes?</p>						
7	<p>Other issues</p> <p>Are there any other issues /stressors that need to be taken account of – e.g. difficulties at home, unexpected life changes?</p>						

TEAM STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT: QUESTIONS TO IDENTIFY CONCERNS IN EACH OF THE SIX MAIN STRESS CATEGORIES

SOURCES OF STRESS

QUESTIONS TO ASK

Relationships	• Are you affected by any conflict in the team?	
	• Are you subjected to any bullying or harassment at work?	
	• Do you feel the team works well together?	
Role	• Are you clear about your roles and responsibilities at work?	
	• Do you feel that there is any conflict in your role?	
	• Do you understand others roles in the team?	
Change	• Are you made aware of any changes that are happening at work?	
	• Do you understand why the change is happening?	
	• Do you understand the impact on your job of any change?	
	• Do you feel well supported during change at work?	

§ You can give this questionnaire out as a survey and collate responses, or if your team is small, use it as a guide for asking questions with them in a team meeting. Do a basic frequency count of yes's and no's from your team members responses.

§ Conduct team discussions/ focus groups to explore any areas that seem to be higher risk (i.e. more negative than positive responses to the questions). You can also use the HSE stress questionnaire tool for more detailed analysis. Please seek advice from the occupational health department or go to the stress at work website on the intranet.

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TEAM STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT FORM – FOR MANAGER TO COMPLETE

Risk assessment for:

Dept/Team..... Faculty/Department.....

Manager..... Date.....

Type of Stressor	Specific causes of workplace stress identified within each category	Existing workplace precautions already in place	Further action to be taken	Who will ensure the action is done? and Review date
Demands				
Control				

Support				
Type of Stressor	Specific causes of workplace stress			