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PURPOSE

The Council’s health and safety policies, performance standards and guidance notes should be regarded as the health and safety standard each Department, Service Unit, School and Team is expected to achieve and against which health and safety performance will be monitored and audited.

The purpose of this performance standard is to provide guidance on the principles and processes to reducing stress related sickness absence or presenteeism (see page 6) by developing resilient staff through both the team and individual stress risk assessment processes, ensuring that every staff member is given the best possible opportunity to perform effectively and efficiently in the workplace.

STRESS AND PRESSURE

Understanding the difference between pressure and stress is essential to enable employees and managers to determine the severity of particular hazards, situations or events, to decide if a person or team is under more pressure than usual.

The Health and Safety Executive’s definition of stress is; “Stress is the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demands placed upon them”

Stress in itself is not an illness, but prolonged exposure to excessive pressures can lead to psychological conditions such as anxiety or depression. There are also physical ill-health conditions such as stomach ulcers and skin conditions that can be aggravated or caused by stress.

Pressure however, is the positive, motivating or driving factor that inspires people to perform to their full potential. A reasonable amount of pressure is necessary to ensure staff perform to their capabilities and achieve their goals. However, sustained and prolonged pressure is unhealthy and can be termed as negative pressure. These consistently high levels of pressure can lead to staff developing stress related symptoms.

Without pressure we get bored and switch our focus to other tasks. Positive amounts of pressure stimulate us to achieve, grow and learn. When we are stretched and challenged, we perform well, but too much persistent pressure can lead to stress. Stress impacts negatively on workplace performance and personal wellbeing.
**Presenteeism**

Presenteeism is when staff attend work when they are either unwell or have work or non-work related issues on their mind which prevents them from working effectively and effectively. Presenteeism has a similar impact on the workplace as sickness absence, as it affects productivity and morale. Presenteeism can also lead to longer recovery periods.

This performance standard will also assist to reduce the effects of presenteeism through addressing and supporting staff through work and non-work related issues.

**MANAGING STRESS**

**Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards**

1. To assist organisations with managing work related stress, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have developed the Stress Management Standards. The Stress Management Standards approach requires managers, employees and their representatives to work together to improve certain areas of work, described in the Standards, which will have a positive effect on employee wellbeing.

2. The management standards outline the causes of work-related stress and the ‘states to be achieved’, which organisations should work towards. The approach is aimed at the organisation rather than individuals, so that a larger number of employees can benefit from any actions taken.

3. Plymouth City Council’s approach to managing work related stress is heavily based on the HSE Stress Management Standards. The standards were developed to reduce the effects of excessive pressure on groups of staff, but the Council has adopted them so they can be used to reduce the effects of excessive pressure for individuals also.

**Management competencies for managing or reducing stress**

4. Whether you are addressing pressure within a team or an individual, your actions and approach as a manager has a significant impact on dealing with and resolving situations.

5. The HSE’s stress management competency indicator tool is designed to allow you to assess whether your behaviour as a manager is effective for preventing and reducing stress at work. The aim is to help you to reflect upon your own behaviour and management style. The competencies focus on four behavioural areas (outlined below) which have been identified as being important for managers to prevent or reduce stress in their staff. The stress management competency indicator tool can be found on the Health and Safety Executives website, [http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/mcit.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/mcit.pdf) HSE four behavioural competencies include:
TRAINING

6. It is important that those with responsibility for health, safety and wellbeing management or carrying out stress and resilience risk assessments, receive appropriate levels of training to enable them to effectively carry out their role or function. The table below provides a guide to the level of training required:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Sub-Competency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respectful and responsible: Managing emotions and having integrity</td>
<td>Integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing emotions</td>
<td>Managing emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considerate approach</td>
<td>Considerate approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing and communicating existing and future work</td>
<td>Proactive work management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participative/empowering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing the individual within the team</td>
<td>Personally accessible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sociable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empathetic engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasoning/Managing difficult situations</td>
<td>Managing conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use of organisational resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking responsibility for resolving issues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IOSH Managing safely</th>
<th>Health, Safety and Wellbeing induction</th>
<th>Introduction to risk assessment (general)</th>
<th>Stress and resilience risk assessment training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Directors</td>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>Managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heads of Service</td>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>Supervisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Risk assessors</td>
<td>Risk Assessors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


WHY A RISK ASSESSMENT IS REQUIRED

7. Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 employers have a general duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health of their employees at work. This includes taking steps to make sure they do not suffer stress-related illness as a result of their work.

8. Regulation 3 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to assess risks to health and safety from the hazards of work. This includes the risk of employees developing stress-related illness because of their work. You are required to carry out a ‘suitable and sufficient risk assessment’.

9. A risk assessment for work-related stress involves the same basic principles and process as a risk assessment for physical hazards. Further information on general risk assessments can be found on the document library in the Council’s [HPS 01 Health and Safety Risk Assessment](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/health_and_safety_training.pdf) performance standard.

TEAM RISK ASSESSMENTS

This section concentrates on completing and reviewing the annual team risk assessment.
10. The purpose of a team risk assessment is to identify common issues that affect a team’s performance, attitude or behaviour. It is important to note that a successful team risk assessment relies heavily on team co-operation and managers valuing their opinions.

11. The team risk assessment must be completed annually and a new questionnaire must be filled out by the team each year.

12. Once the questionnaires have been received, the whole risk assessment process is completed using the Team Stress and Resilience Risk Assessment Tool. There is no need to use any additional forms to record the assessment. This helps to keep all of the information in one document.

13. The team assessment tool is an effective way to establish the general perception of pressures that affect the team. However; this generalisation means it is not always possible to easily identify individuals who may be under excessive pressure. Therefore, there is a responsibility for managers and staff to recognise where a risk assessment for an individual member of staff is required.

Details on completing an assessment for an individual can be found on page 16.
TEAM RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS FLOW CHART

Notification to staff

- Inform staff through letter or team meeting that the risk assessment needs to be completed

Step One - Identify the hazards

- The primary sources of stress have already been identified through the HSE Management Standards. These are outlined on page 10

Step Two - Decide who may be harmed and the consequences

- Circulate the link or the paper questionnaire to the on-line team stress and resilience questionnaire to staff with a date to be completed by. The information from this will help you identify the levels of pressure your staff are under. Copy and paste link below:
  
  http://plymouth.consult.limehouse.co.uk/public/hr/staff_surveys/stress_resilience_questionnaire

Step Three - Evaluate the risk and decide where actions are needed

- Contact Learning & Development after the survey closing date and request results.
- Analyse the data and assess where you need to take further actions. This may be the whole of a primary hazard or particular questions associated with it.
- Link possible solutions to focus groups

Step Four – Record risk assessment and implement actions

- Complete the risk assessment and action plan on the relevant worksheets in the same spreadsheet received from Learning & Development - this enables you to record hazards and risks where further actions are required and create an action plan with realistic target dates and assign responsibility.

Step five – Monitor and review the assessment

- The final worksheet in the tool is the risk assessment review sheet, this sheet allows you to monitor the progress of the actions implemented and review the assessment as required. Here you record any reviews of the team risk assessment.
Notification to staff

14. It is important to inform staff of your intention to complete a team stress and resilience risk assessment. This can be done verbally by informing staff at team meetings, via letter or email for less centralised teams.

15. Engagement is the key to completing a successful team assessment; therefore, it may also be necessary to discuss the importance and value of the team’s perception and opinions at team meetings prior to sending out the stress and resilience questionnaire. Good communications are essential to ensure staff:
   - are engaged
   - understand the process
   - are confident that opinions are treated in strict confidence
   - are assured (confidentiality is maintained) when team results are communicated
   - understand that actions will be taken where reasonably practicable to do so
   - will be part of the solution and consulted on regarding suitable control measures.

16. Email the link to the stress and resilience questionnaire (http://plymouth.consult.limehouse.co.uk/public/hr/staff_surveys/stress__resilience_questionnaire) and set a realistic date for staff to complete it. It is important that as many of the team as possible participate in the process, so it may be necessary to send reminders to the team.

17. Paper versions of the questionnaire are still available to download on document library for those who do not have access to a computer.

RISK ASSESSMENT STEPS

Step One - Identify the hazards

18. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have identified six primary sources of work related stress. They are; demands, control, support, relationships, role and change.

19. An outline of activities for each hazard can be found in the table below: Information on possible solutions to these hazards can be found later in paragraph 83.

Primary sources of work related stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary hazard</th>
<th>Associated activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demands</td>
<td>this includes issues such as workload, work patterns and the work environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>how much say the person has in the way they do their work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>this includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>this includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HSPS15 Stress and resilience Version 5.1 04/06/2015

Hazard specific to your teams

20. As well as the general primary hazards identified in the Management Standards, because of the nature or context of their work, for example physical, verbal violence or shift work there may be specific hazards to which your staff may be exposed. You should consider the impact of these hazards when completing the risk assessment.

Step Two - Decide who may be harmed and the consequences

21. This step involves gathering information from your teams. This is done by staff completing the online or paper based team stress and resilience questionnaire.

22. Team Stress and Resilience Questionnaire

23. The team stress and resilience questionnaire is anonymous and does not include staff details. When completing paper versions to ensure staff anonymity, it may be necessary to set up a central location point for staff to place their completed questionnaires or have them collected by a third party, for example the service health and safety champion or an independent manager.

24. The questionnaire consists of 32 questions which have been developed by the HSE, recognising working conditions or activities that affect staff wellbeing. Staff responses to the questions will help to determine the current working conditions and enable you to develop solutions and monitor improvements.

25. When completing the questionnaire staff must reflect on their work conditions or activities in the last six months.

26. Where staff identify that a particular question places them under greater pressure, they must quantify this by adding a brief comment. Staff must be reassured that any comments will only be used to gain a better understanding of how the issue affects them and provide the manager with an indication of what solutions may be needed.

27. To provide an accurate sample, it is important that staff complete all of the questions. Even if they feel that a particular question does not apply to them.

Step Three - Evaluate the risk and decide what actions are needed

Team Stress and Resilience Risk Assessment Tool

28. When using the online questionnaire, after the questionnaire closing date, the manager must contact the Learning & Development team for the results. They will send you the team stress and resilience risk assessment tool completed with the results.

29. The Team Stress and Resilience Risk Assessment Tool, comprises of four worksheets which enables you to complete steps three, four and five of the risk assessment process.

- worksheet one – the input data sheet which is pre-populated by the online questionnaire
- worksheet two – the data analysis sheet which is pre-populated by the results of the questionnaire and establishment data is used to complete the number of staff in the service area.
- worksheet three – the risk assessment and action planning sheet
- worksheet four – risk assessment review sheet.
Worksheet one – Input data sheet

30. The input data sheet contains the results of the questionnaires returned by staff.

31. If using the online version this sheet will be automatically populated for you by the Learning and Development team. If you are using a paper version you will need to manually enter this data. Working from left to right, input the numerical value given by the employee, corresponding to the particular question. Please ensure you pay particular attention to the numerical value recorded by staff, as owing to the design of the questionnaire sections vary between ascend and descend when reading from left to right. A new line is started for each employee.

Worksheet two – Data analysis sheet

32. The data analysis sheet is mostly automatically populated by the information that has entered into the data input sheet and information on staff numbers are taken from Plymouth City Councils establishment data.

33. If you are using a paper version you must ensure that you complete the following information at the beginning of the data analysis worksheet:

- managers name
- team name
- number in team
- number of questionnaires returned (if necessary this information can be used to encourage staff to engage in the process, particularly if returns are low).

34. The data analysis sheet provides a summary of the overall results for the six primary hazards outlined on page 10. This will enable you to see at a glance if particular hazards create higher levels of excessive pressure than others through your team.

35. The analysis sheet also contains detailed data on the reaction to specific questions for each primary hazard. Using the percentage score column, you can identify specific activities which are causing staff more concern, for example in Demands the question with the highest percentage score may be “I have unachievable deadlines” indicating that the team generally have very demanding or excess workloads. Remember there may be a combination of factors creating excessive pressure, so do not look at any one of the activities in isolation. Often one control measure will address many issues within a primary hazard.

36. For primary hazards or individual activities scoring 36% or more it will be necessary to record your current controls and any further actions you need to take, in the action plan worksheet (worksheet three) of the risk assessment tool. Further information on recording the risk assessment can be found on page 13.

37. Cross reference the percentage score of the hazard with the risk score and description table below, to decide how urgently you need to take any further action.

Risk score and description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk score</th>
<th>Risk level</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0% – 35%</td>
<td>Insignificant /Low</td>
<td>Acceptable</td>
<td>No further actions needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36% - 64%</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Tolerable/Adequate</td>
<td>But ensure that there is nothing else which could be done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65% - 80%</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Undesirable</td>
<td>Immediately review current control measures, and where appropriate decide on further actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 81%</td>
<td>Very High</td>
<td>Unacceptable</td>
<td>Stop activity and make immediate improvements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Involving staff in developing solutions**

38. When deciding if additional actions are needed you should involve your team in the solution.

39. If you have a small team you may wish to discuss the results of the risk assessment at a team meeting to identify what else could be done to reduce the risk. For larger teams you may choose to set up a focus group. Information on organising and running focus groups can be found on the Health and Safety Executives website.

40. Involving staff in developing solutions directly or in a focus group is one of the most effective ways of identifying actions that may be required to reduce workplace pressures. It is an ideal opportunity for:
   - listening to employees and learning from them
   - facilitating active participation of employees in the risk assessment process
   - demonstrating management commitment to an engaging process of managing the risks of work related pressures.

41. In more complex situations it may be necessary to have an external facilitator to act as a mediator for the focus group. But this is not essential as solutions should be developed locally between staff and managers.

**Deciding on further control measures**

42. The process of developing solutions is often seen as the most difficult part of managing the possible causes of work-related stress. Each team will have their own needs and will require a specific combination of solutions to reduce pressures. To assist with this, we've included a list of common problems and suggestions on what solutions could be considered. Suggestions of possible solutions can be found in paragraph 84.

**Other information contained in the analysis sheet**

The analysis sheets provides information on:

- the percentage of questionnaires returned against the number in the team, this is taken from Plymouth City Council’s establishment data.
- possible score the team could have achieved (this is the highest score that the team could have recorded based on the number of questionnaires returned)
- total score – this is the actual score that was recorded against the possible score. (the lower this score is in relation to the maximum score the better)
- percentage score (maximum score) – this is a percentage representation of the scores. (it allows you to tell at a quick glance to identify areas which may be causing more concerns than others)
- average score – this gives the average of the score entered for each question
- mode score – this is the most frequently used number and helps you gauge the general feeling of the team
• range score – this is the difference between the lowest and the highest score recoded. This allows you to determine if there may be individuals in the team who may be experiencing pressure over the general team opinion.

Step Four – Record risk assessment and action planning – Work sheet three

43. This part of the process requires you to analyses the information provided by the data analysis sheet to determine where you need to take further actions. As outlined in paragraph 32, further actions are required where a primary hazard or an associated activity have recorded a percentage score of 36% or more.

44. There is no need to use a separate form to record your risk assessment as this is incorporated in the team stress and resilience risk assessment tool on worksheet three.

45. On reaching 36% you must complete the risk assessment and action plan worksheet for either the whole of the primary hazard or any associated activities exceeding 36%. This may require you to record current control measures and develop an action plan for individual activities associated with the primary hazard, even though the total percentage score of the primary hazard is below 36%.

For example the primary hazard of change may only have a total score 29%, but question 31 “Staff are always consulted about changes at work” may have achieved a percentage score of 35%. In this case you are required to record this activity in worksheet three, identify current controls and develop an action plan.

46. Primary hazards or associated activities falling below 36% will be deemed to be generally under control and will not require recording or further actions developed. The supporting evidence and justification for this will be contained within the data analysis sheet.

Action plan

47. It is the manager’s responsibility to develop and maintain the action plan. The action plan section also assists you to prioritise, plan and monitor the effectiveness of the actions that have been identified to reduce the risk of a particular stressor.

Communicating the risk assessment

48. It is important that the results of the risk assessment are communicated to staff. Staff should receive communications when, step four has been completed, where a general outline of the results should be shared. This also provides an opportunity to discuss what further actions may be required or to request nominations for staff if setting up a focus group.

49. You must also ensure staff are made aware when actions have been agreed and when they will be implemented.

50. Remember to also share the risk assessment with TU representatives.

51.

Escalating outstanding actions

52. Where control measures have high costs associated with them, it may be necessary to escalate them to the next tier manager for review.

Step 5 – Monitor and review the assessment

The assessment must be monitored to ensure:
- items from the action plan are completed on time
- the control measures remain effective and appropriate
- any additional controls have been implemented and are working as expected.

53. Periodically check that agreed actions are being undertaken, for example, that meetings are being held, or that there is evidence that certain activities have taken place. It is important to make a record of this progress against your action plan.

54. Another way to measure your progress is to repeat the team stress and resilience questionnaire as described in Step two on page 11.

Review - worksheet four

55. Using worksheet four of the Team Stress and Resilience Risk Assessment Tool, you must review the assessment to ensure that it remains up to date and appropriate for the work which it covers. The assessment must be reviewed and amended when one or more of the following triggers are reached:
- following an incident which highlights deficiencies in existing risk control measures or previously unforeseen hazards are identified, for example a change in working practices, restructure, office move or working hours
- when actions from the action plan have been completed and measured to ensure they have had the desired effect. These actions should be transferred to the “what are you already doing to control the risk” column, as they are now a current control measure
- if significant changes are made to the workplace, work activities or equipment, for example a change of location or staffing levels (up or down)
- if new legislation / guidance / codes of practice or national standards are revised or introduced
- as a minimum every 12 months (the team must complete a new questionnaire on the anniversary of this review).

56. You must keep a record of your assessment reviews, even if there are no changes required, by simply recording the review on the assessment review table. Do not save over existing risk assessments once an update or review has been completed. Where assessments have been changed it is necessary to archive these assessments, as they may be required for evidence.

Risk assessment retention periods

Where assessments have been reviewed as per paragraph 49 they should be retained as below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Assessments</th>
<th>Records</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Retention Period</th>
<th>Event Prompt (i.e. start of Retention Period)</th>
<th>Authority Guidance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risk Assessments</td>
<td>Destroy</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>Date created</td>
<td>Management of Health and Safety at Work Regs 1992</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COMPLETING A RISK ASSESSMENT FOR AN INDIVIDUAL MEMBER OF STAFF

57. Work related pressures can never be totally eliminated, and there will be times when staff are placed under increased pressure. These periods can be tolerated, but they must be effectively managed and should not last for prolonged periods. It is important to remember that we each have different tolerance levels, so higher levels of pressure may be manageable for one person but not for another. It is also worthwhile to remember that this process is not about apportioning blame, but is concerned with addressing an individual’s perception of the amount of pressure they are under, how it affects them, and developing reasonable solutions to reduce the pressures.

58. The risk assessment process for an individual differs from the team assessment as it:

- considers SEVEN primary hazards in addition to the six HSE primary hazards identified on page 10, the individual’s needs are also considered. These are outlined in paragraph 59.
- instead of using a questionnaire to identify hazards; hazards are identified by holding a meeting with the member of staff to discuss work or non-work related issues. You can however, refer to the prompts to solution section on page 23 to assist with the discussions
- the level of risk is determined using the ‘pressure risk scale’
- the assessment is recorded on the Individual stress and resilience risk assessment form (RA15)
- the assessment is held confidentially on the employees personnel file.

59. There is a joint responsibility for managers and employees to recognise when an individual assessment may be needed:

- if a manager recognises or is notified that a member of staff is under excessive pressure, or displaying signs of stress, they should take action as outlined in this document
- if a member of staff has concerns over the amount of pressure they are under or they are developing signs of stress, they should inform their manager or Human Resources Adviser, who should then take action outlined in this document.

60. In some cases it may be necessary for assessments to be carried out by a different manager, HR or health, safety and wellbeing adviser. Where this is necessary the manager or member of staff should contact their HR adviser for further advice.

61. There is no legal obligation for the Council to address non-work related pressures. However, the Council is committed to supporting staff through non-work related issues and assist them to address these pressures as effectively as possible and to assist them to remain in work during potentially difficult times.
Risk assessment for a member of staff flow chart

Identification/notification that a member of staff (MOS) is experiencing or is at risk of work or non-work-related stress

**Step one** – Hold a meeting with the MOS to identify the hazards

**Step two** – Who is the assessment for? In this case it will be the individual MOS. Is there an existing stress risk assessment in place for the MOS?

Yes

Review the risk assessment with the MOS to ensure that it is still relevant

Step 3 - evaluate the risk using the pressure scale score, and review existing control measures, decide if further solutions are needed

Step four – update the existing risk assessment or record the assessment on the individual RA form

No

Agree an action plan and implement solutions

Step four – record the assessment on the individual risk assessment form

Step five - monitor and review. Hold regular meetings with the MOS and review the effectiveness of solutions and update risk assessment
Identification or notification that an employee is experiencing excessive pressure

You may be informed that a member of staff is experiencing the effects of excessive pressure through:

- a GP fit note
- at one to one meeting
- in writing by the employee
- by a concerned employee
- in general conversation.

The line manager or other team members may observe physical, emotional or behavioural changes in an employee. These may include:

- a dip in work performance
- relationships with others at work
- attitude or behavioural changes
- increased sickness absence.

A detailed list of signs and symptoms of stress can be found on page 23. Following identification that a member of staff is experiencing the effects of excessive pressure, either visually, verbally or in writing, the manager must complete a stress and resilience risk assessment without delay.

RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS

62. The individual risk assessment relies heavily on open communication between the member of staff and their line manager. It follows the same basic five steps as a general and the team risk assessment:

- identify the hazards
- decide who may be harmed and the consequences
- evaluate the risks and decide what actions are needed
- record the risk assessment using the individual stress and resilience risk assessment form
- monitor and review the assessment.

Step one - Identify the hazards – arranging a meeting

63. When notified or recognising that an employee is experiencing or displaying signs of stress, the first step for the line manager is to organise a meeting with the purpose of identifying the hazards that are the source or sources of excessive pressure.

64. It will normally take several meetings to identify all hazards and decide on appropriate solutions. You must also be aware that in most cases this is the first time an employee has formally spoken about their stress or feelings. So it is important that when arranging a meeting, the line manager considers the following points:

- provide a suitable place or private room to hold the meeting
- do not rush allow sufficient time for it
- if the issues are likely to be sensitive or potentially concern other members of staff, hold the meeting at a different location to where the employee normally works
- advise them they can have someone with them for support, this can be another member of staff or TU representative
- be discreet when booking appointments in calendars
- put them at ease by expressing that you wish to help and support them
- listen, do not be judgemental or critical, remember everybody has different thresholds
- clarify any points raised to ensure that you have a clear understanding of the issues
- do not discuss the issue with other members of the team
- it is important to be as specific as possible as this will help you develop effective solutions. Ask how this area of work activity became a problem. What happened? Has it always been a problem? If not, what has changed?

Hazards affecting individuals

65. The Council’s process for an individual’s risk assessment, consists of 7 hazards, these include the six HSE primary work related hazards, (demands, control, support, role, change and relationships), but also hazards which affect or relate to individuals too.

These needs may include:
- pre-existing mental health problems
- physical health conditions or disabilities
- has the member of staff previously been affected by excessive pressure
- young, old or inexperienced workers
- new and expectant mothers
- conflicting demands of work and home
- financial issues
- bereavement
- divorce
- low levels of support at home
- doing more than one job
- home life pressures negatively impacting on work performance.

Staff who are absent from work

66. If the member of staff is already absent from work it is vital that the line manager contacts them as soon as possible to arrange to hold the meeting at a suitable time and location, to discuss and complete a risk assessment. This assessment is important to provide them with support and aims to develop solutions prior to their return to work. This may include meeting in a neutral location or the employee’s home. If the meeting is to be held outside of the workplace the meeting must still be organised as outlined on page 18.

67. Where direct contact is not possible between the manager and employee, the line manager should make alternative arrangements to contact them. This may include:
- Human Resources Adviser
- another manager who has worked with or has a relationship with the member of staff
- trade union representative
- another team member.
Step two - Decide who might be harmed and the consequences

68. As this is an individual risk assessment it will relate directly to that member of staff. Consequences may include:

- a dip in performance
- short or long term sickness absence
- loss of confidence and belief in ability (low self-esteem)
- unable to cope with high levels of pressure not meeting targets
- poor attitude towards others or others attitude towards the member of staff.

Step three - Evaluate the risks and decide what actions are needed

69. Evaluating the risk is done using the ‘pressure scale score’ on page 21. The pressure scale not only provides an indication of the pressure level experienced by the member of staff at the initial risk assessment stage, but is also used to track their recovery during the review stages.

70. The member of staff should be given a copy of the pressure scale score at the meeting and through your discussions you should identify and agree the point where they are on the scale. This point should then relate to a single value within the range. This value will then be recorded in the pressure scale score column on the RA15 form.

71. The pressure scale score also provides information on where the risk is acceptable, tolerable, undesirable or unacceptable and any management action which may be required at these levels.

72. The table below provides some guidance on what the member of staff may be experiencing or feeling at each pressure level:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pressure level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>Low pressure levels, working well within their capabilities and comfort level. Pressures may increase infrequently but the member of staff still works within their capabilities and manages all pressures well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stretch</td>
<td>More frequent increased pressure levels, working more often outside of the comfort level. Staff indicate or it is recognised they occasionally display symptoms of stress, but this does not result in sickness absence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strain</td>
<td>Regular high levels of pressure for long substantial periods of time. Regularly working outside of the stretch level or capabilities. Staff indicate they frequently display signs of stress, which result in frequent short term sickness absence, presenteeism, reduced performance, low self-esteem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panic/stress</td>
<td>Prolonged, repeated and on-going very high levels of pressure always working outside of strain level and capabilities. Pressures leading to developing and displaying more serious signs of stress, resulting in frequent absence, long term sickness absence or crisis. Considerable decrease in performance and very low self-esteem.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Pressure scale score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pressure level</th>
<th>Comfort</th>
<th>Stretch</th>
<th>Strain</th>
<th>Panic/Stress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance level</td>
<td>Acceptable</td>
<td>Tolerable</td>
<td>Undesirable</td>
<td>Unacceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk score</td>
<td>1 – 5</td>
<td>6 – 10</td>
<td>11 – 16</td>
<td>17 – 25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management actions</th>
<th>Pressure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No action.</td>
<td>Staff should be monitored through 1 – 2 – 1 meetings, ensure that existing controls are maintained, monitored, reviewed and that there is nothing else which could be done. Ensure adequate management availability, sufficient support and guidance is provided, and where necessary a stress risk assessment should be completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete a stress risk assessment and immediately review current control measures, and decide on solutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Immediately stop the activity. Complete a stress risk assessment and make immediate improvements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Agreeing appropriate solutions

73. Once the line manager and member of staff have discussed and agreed the possible cause of excessive pressure and established the pressure risk score, it is then necessary to agree what further actions are needed to reduce the risk. This may include actions for the member of staff and the manager. Guidance on possible solutions can be found in paragraph 83.

Step four – record your findings

74. The individual risk assessment must be recorded on the Council’s individual stress and resilience risk assessment form. The form has been designed to guide you through the risk assessment process incorporating the five key steps and action planning and review sections.

75. When completing an individual risk assessment you should reference all seven hazards identified in paragraph 59 but you only need to record actions for the particular hazards that are the cause of the excessive pressure. For example, if the member of staff does not have any issues with their role, simply record in the current control box that ‘A. Another indicated that there are no issues with their job role’.

Step five – Monitor and Review

Monitoring

76. The line manager must monitor the assessment to ensure:
   - solutions from the action plan are completed on time
   - solutions remain effective and appropriate
   - any additional solutions have been implemented and are effective.

Review

77. The assessment must be reviewed as frequently as necessary. The frequency should be agreed at the meeting following completing the initial risk assessment. The line manager must hold a review meeting with the member of staff to discuss how effective the solutions have been or not, and record any changes in pressure levels using the pressure risk scale.

78. The review must be recorded on the review table of the risk assessment form and signed by the manager and member of staff as an acknowledgement of the meeting taking place.

79. The review process must continue until the pressure levels have returned to a tolerable level either within the comfort of stretch levels.

80. Once all solutions are in place, effective and sustainable and a tolerable level of pressure has been reached, the risk assessment can be signed off by the manager and member of staff as being complete.

81. The risk assessment should be held confidentially in the employee’s personnel folder for six years.

82. It may be necessary to review a completed assessment when there are changes in the individuals work, workplace or where a similar situation may be developing which may increase the pressure levels experienced by the member of staff.
RECOGNISING SIGNS OF STRESS IN COLLEAGUES

Symptoms of stress can manifest in many forms below is a table of some of the more common signs that people may display.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude or behavioural change</th>
<th>Relationships with others at work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• increased irritability, impatience, moodiness</td>
<td>• conflict or tension with colleagues or customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• forgetfulness and difficulty concentrating</td>
<td>• more aggressive or passive than usual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• persistent negative thinking and comments</td>
<td>• Withdrawal, alienation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• increased accident rate, reckless behaviour</td>
<td>• loss of sense of humour, less friendly or sociable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• loss of motivation and commitment</td>
<td>• reduced team spirit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• more emotional than usual – crying, sulking, bad temper.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• conflict or tension with colleagues or customers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• more aggressive or passive than usual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Withdrawal, alienation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• loss of sense of humour, less friendly or sociable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• reduced team spirit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work performance</th>
<th>Attendance and sickness absence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• reduced work performance (quality, quantity, the time it takes them)</td>
<td>• erratic or poor time keeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• more mistakes</td>
<td>• working longer hours (to keep up or staying away from home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• deterioration in work planning</td>
<td>• increased absenteeism (especially frequent short periods of absence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• reduced contribution in team meetings.</td>
<td>• presenteeism.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PROMPTS TO SOLUTIONS

Keeping in touch

83. The line manager should arrange to keep in touch with the employee by telephone, email or face to face. Face to face meetings can take place in private at the workplace or at another appropriate location. Keeping in touch prevents the employee from feeling isolated and enables the Council to understand more about the nature and likely duration of the absence and any steps that may be taken to assist and support the employee to return to work.

84. The frequency of meetings should be discussed and agreed between the line manager and member of staff.

Further guidance on managing sickness absence can be found in the Managing Attendance Guide on the document library.

Phased return to work

85. Generally, once an absence becomes long term (over four weeks) the member of staff is likely to become detached from work and it becomes very difficult for them to return. Therefore, early intervention is essential to support them back into the workplace either on a part time basis or in another team as quickly as possible. This may involve implementing a phased return to work.

86. If a phased return to work is appropriate, a programme should be drawn up by the line manager and employee, supported as appropriate by Occupational Health or the employee’s doctor (normally through the issue of a fit note). These programmes are designed to gradually increase the employee’s working hours and range of tasks until they are working their full normal duties.
Reasonable adjustments
87. Reasonable adjustments may be required to assist and support an employee to return to and stay in work. Adjustments may be part of a phased return to work or may be a permanent change in the role. Any adjustments must be discussed and agreed by both the line manager and the employee, with HR and medical input as appropriate. There should be regular reviews to ensure that the adjustments remain necessary and continue to be effective, and to consider whether any additional adjustments may be appropriate.

88. A review meeting must be arranged after an agreed period to review the progress of recovery against the pressure scale score on page 21.

Further information on phased return to work and reasonable adjustments can be found in Managing Attendance Guide on the document library.

Possible Solutions for primary hazards
89. The table below provides some guidance on adjustments or solutions that can be considered. Please note this list is not exhaustive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demands</th>
<th>Examples of possible control measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workload</strong></td>
<td>▪ develop personal work plans to ensure staff know what their job involves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much work to</td>
<td>▪ hold weekly team meetings to discuss the anticipated workload for the forthcoming week (and to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do in the time</td>
<td>deal with any planned absences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>available</td>
<td>▪ hold monthly meetings with individuals to discuss their workload and any anticipated challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work that is too</td>
<td>▪ adjust work patterns to cope with peaks and staff absences (this needs to be fair and agreed with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>difficult to do or</td>
<td>employees)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not achievable</td>
<td>▪ ensure sufficient resources are available for staff to be able to do their jobs (time, equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrealistic demands, targets or deadlines</td>
<td>▪ provide training (formal or informal) to help staff prioritise, or information on how they can seek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work demands</td>
<td>help if they have conflicting priorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>effecting work-life</td>
<td>▪ Discourage long working hours and taking work home – managers should lead by example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>balance, regularly</td>
<td>▪ Encourage staff to take leave allowance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>completing or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taking work home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competency</strong></td>
<td>▪ devise a system to keep training records up to date to ensure employees are competent and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>comfortable in undertaking the core functions of their job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ consider implementing personal development/training plans which require individuals to identify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>development/training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>opportunities which can then be discussed with management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ link training to performance monitoring arrangements to ensure it is effective and sufficient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Working patterns</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ review working hours and shift work systems – have these been agreed with staff?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ consider changes to start and end times to help employees to cope with pressures external to the organisation (for example child care, poor commuting routes etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ develop a system to notify employees of unplanned tight deadlines and any exceptional need to work long hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical environment and violence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ ensure your risk assessments for physical hazards and risks are up to date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ assess the risk of physical violence and verbal abuse. Take steps to deal with this in consultation with employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ provide training to help staff deal with and defuse difficult situations (for example difficult phone calls, aggressive members of the public).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees have insufficient say in how the work is done or pace of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of staff participation in decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ allocate responsibility to teams rather than individuals to take projects forward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ agree objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ agree roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ agree timescales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ agree the provision of managerial support, for example through regular progress meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ talk about the way decisions are made – is there scope for more involvement?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Support

**Examples of possible control measures**

- hold regular one-to-one meetings to talk about any emerging issues or pressures
- hold regular liaison/team meetings to discuss unit pressures
- include ‘work-related stress/emerging pressures’ as a standing item for staff meetings and/or performance reviews
- seek examples of how people 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, for example ‘open door’ policies, or agreed times when managers are able to discuss emerging pressures
- introduce flexibility in work schedules (where possible) to enable staff to cope with domestic commitments
- Develop training arrangements and refresher sessions to ensure training and competencies are up to date and appropriate for the core functions of employees’ jobs
- Talk about ways the organisation on could provide support if someone is experiencing problems outside work.
- disseminate information on other areas of support (human resources department, occupational health, employee assistance programme).

### Relationships

**Examples of possible control measures**

- Managers must react promptly to concerns about bullying and harassment – this kind of behaviour must not be tolerated
- Managers who witness harassment must take immediate action which, depending on the circumstances, may include:
  - an informal discussion with the employee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Examples of possible control measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No recognition of stress in the workplace</td>
<td>hold regular one-to-one meetings to talk about any emerging issues or pressures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of communication between employees and management</td>
<td>hold regular liaison/team meetings to discuss unit pressures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of emotional support</td>
<td>include ‘work-related stress/emerging pressures’ as a standing item for staff meetings and/or performance reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No sense of pride or achievement</td>
<td>seek examples of how people would like to, or have, received good support from managers or colleagues – can these be adopted across the unit?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of recognition for a job well done</td>
<td>ask how employees would like to access managerial support, for example ‘open door’ policies, or agreed times when managers are able to discuss emerging pressures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems are not recognised or solved promptly</td>
<td>introduce flexibility in work schedules (where possible) to enable staff to cope with domestic commitments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop training arrangements and refresher sessions to ensure training and competencies are up to date and appropriate for the core functions of employees’ jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talk about ways the organisation on could provide support if someone is experiencing problems outside work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>disseminate information on other areas of support (human resources department, occupational health, employee assistance programme).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>Examples of possible control measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bullying at work</td>
<td>Managers must react promptly to concerns about bullying and harassment – this kind of behaviour must not be tolerated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment</td>
<td>Managers who witness harassment must take immediate action which, depending on the circumstances, may include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>an informal discussion with the employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management styles likely that increase stress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other colleagues’ attitudes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients/Service users and the General Public</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
committing the act
- referring the employee to the anti bullying and harassment procedure guide
- considering taking disciplinary or formal action.

Formal procedure should only be adopted where, despite all efforts, a resolution has not been achieved through informal communication channels, or in cases where it is appropriate to go straight to formal procedures.

A harassment allegation is considered to be a grievance and the grievance procedures should be followed grievance procedure guide.

Employees who witness the harassment of another member of staff should report it to their line manager or HR Adviser who will take appropriate action.

Managers should encourage staff to recognise the individual contributions of other team members and the benefits of the whole team pulling together
- team building
- team planning
- identify ways of celebrating team success
- encourage good communication and provide appropriate training to aid skill development (for example listening skills, confidence building)
- identify ways to celebrate success (for example informal lunches/wash-up meetings at the end of a project).

An employee may feel able to deal with the matter on their own.
Speaking to the alleged harasser may be appropriate when:
- an employee feels able to meet with the person face to face to discuss the issue and find resolution, apology etc
- the alleged incident is not serious
- the incident is recent, and the employee seeks an apology at that time.

Further information can also be found in the anti bullying and harassment procedure guide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Examples of possible control measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conflicting job demands</td>
<td>hold team meetings to enable members to clarify their role and to discuss any</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role ambiguity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demands on behaviour</td>
<td>possible role conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New job, promotion or other change of role</td>
<td>display team/department targets and objectives to help clarify team and individual role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New boss</td>
<td>agree specific standards of performance for jobs and individual tasks and review periodically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>introduce personal work plans which are aligned to the outputs of the team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hold regular one-to-one meetings to ensure individuals are clear about their role and know what is planned for the coming months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>develop suitable induction arrangements for new staff — make sure all members of the team understand the role and responsibilities of the new recruit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Examples of possible control measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poorly managed change lack of communication</td>
<td>ensure all staff are aware of why the change is happening — agree a system for doing this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restructuring</td>
<td>define and explain the key steps of the change. Ensure employee consultation and support is a key element of the programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downsizing</td>
<td>establish a system to communicate new developments quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction of new technology or new ways of working</td>
<td>agree methods of communication (for example meetings, notice boards, letters, e-mail, feedback forums etc) and frequency (for example weekly, monthly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty</td>
<td>ensure staff are aware of the impact of the change on their jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job insecurity</td>
<td>provide a system to enable staff to comment and ask questions before, during and after the change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office moves</td>
<td>have an ‘open door’ policy to help staff who want to talk to their managers about their concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>involve staff in discussions about how jobs might be developed and changed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>review team and individual work plans after the change to ensure team and individual objectives are clear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals needs</td>
<td>Examples of possible control measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New and expectant mothers</td>
<td>▪ carry out specific risk assessments for new and expectant mothers, young persons and staff with disabilities or long term health conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young workers - inexperience</td>
<td>▪ pre-employment occupational health screening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-existing mental health problems</td>
<td>▪ ensure job descriptions clearly explain the pressures of the job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical health conditions or disabilities</td>
<td>▪ ensure the right people are recruited to each post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor personal coping skills</td>
<td>▪ access to occupational health service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ access to learning and development opportunities to improve coping skills or work skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ provide adequate staff induction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ provide access to employee assistance programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ provide phased, supported return to work after absence (involve HR and occupational health, where appropriate).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicting demands of work and home</td>
<td>▪ encourage a healthy “work-life balance”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low levels of support at home</td>
<td>▪ where practical provide flexible working arrangements to help staff cope with domestic commitments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual career problems</td>
<td>▪ deal sensitively with staff experiencing problems outside work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing more than one job</td>
<td>▪ explore feasibility of home working (taking into account service needs and health and safety issues)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel to and from work</td>
<td>▪ provide compassionate leave arrangements, where appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long working hours</td>
<td>▪ provide information on the employee assistance programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift work or unsocial working hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems at home impacting on work</td>
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</table>
INTERNAL SUPPORT

90. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team (HSWT) can support service areas and schools through the tool kit by providing:

- two hour briefing sessions for managers
- one hour briefing session for staff
- full training on the risk assessment process for team and individual assessments for managers or the delegated risk assessor
- team risk assessment tool

The HSWT or Human Resources Adviser can also provide support and assistance for managers completing a risk assessment for an individual member of staff.

EXTERNAL SUPPORT

91. When employees require additional support, Plymouth City Council has access to two professional organisations where independent advice can be sought.

Employee Assistance Programme

92. The first step is to ensure that the employee is aware of and has access to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). This service is completely free for staff and is accessible 24 hours a day seven days a week. The EAP offers advice through telephone consultations on work and non-work related issues. Managers do not always need to make a referral as employees contact the provider directly and book their own appointment.

93. The employee assistance programme provides practical information, resources, counselling and advice to help staff balance work, family and personal lives. There is a vast range of topics covered including:

- Relationships
- Childcare
- Stress
- Consumer rights
- Bullying and Harassment
- Travel
- Finance advice
- Health and fitness assessment tool.

94. In exceptional circumstances managers can make a manager referral to the EAP. This must be done with the employee’s agreement. Where agreed with the member of staff, the manager can receive basic information such as an action plan from this process.

95. If you are a manager you will also be able to access "Manager Assist" which provides information on dealing with managerial matters.

Information on the Employee Assistance Programme can be found on Staffroom and School room.

Occupational Health

96. Sometimes it may not be appropriate for an employee to use the EAP. In these cases the EAP provider will generally advise the manager that the employee requires face to face counselling by the OH provider. In these instances the manager should refer the employee to the Occupational Health Provider. Referrals are done through the online portal and the referring manager must be registered on system. Instructions on the use of the Occupational Health Referral Portal can be accessed from Staff Room and School Room.
97. As well as making reasonable adjustments to the working environment there are other factors that can assist to develop staff resilience. An individual’s resilience to stress is closely linked to their general health and wellbeing. Exercise, eating healthily and sleeping sufficiently are all important factors in developing a healthy lifestyle, Occupational Health and the Employee Assistance Programme can also provide advice in these areas.

98. It is also worth remembering that there are often internal interventions or activities that are being organised throughout the council. Promotions and events are posted on the Council’s Staffroom and Schoolroom websites.
FURTHER TIPS ON MANAGING PERSONAL STRESS

Awareness
99. In order to manage stress, it is helpful to understand what causes your stress and how you react to stress. Ask yourself these questions:
- what are the sources of stress in my life?
- what are my emotional and physical reactions to them?
- what are my strengths in dealing with stress?
- what are my limitations in dealing with stress? (do you have difficulty saying no?)

Plan
100. Develop a plan of action by asking yourself these questions:
- what sources of stress can I eliminate or avoid?
- what sources of stress are changeable?
- what one change could I start with that would make the most difference in my life?
- who can I enlist in helping or supporting me with this change?
- how can I include taking care of myself in my plan?

Action
101. Put your plan into action:
- choose one new strategy to add to or change about your current strategies for dealing with stress
- practice a relaxation technique (breathing is one of the most effective ways of reducing tension)
- identify what you do well at in managing your stress (use your past experience as a resource)
- deal with the sources of stress that you can change (create a plan to eliminate, reduce or avoid these sources)

Stress Tips
102. Share your concerns – talk to someone.

Do something you enjoy:
- take a brisk walk
- exercise
- take a break
- get a change of scenery
- set aside time for yourself

Relaxation Techniques
- find a comfortable place to sit, close your eyes and begin to pay attention to your breathing
- take a deep breath in and exhale slowly
- continue breathing deeply and imagine a relaxing holiday spot
- as you continue to breathe slowly, look around at the sights, imagine the sounds and smells.
FURTHER INFORMATION FORMS AND GUIDANCE

Paper Forms if there is no access to a computer
Stress and Resilience Team Questionnaire
Team Stress and Resilience Risk Assessment Tool
Stress and Resilience risk assessment form RA15

Relevant Legislation
Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulation 1999

Guidance
External guidance
Health and Safety Executive
Stress Management Standards
How to organise and run Focus groups
HSE Management competency indicator tool

Internal guidance
Corporate health and safety policy
Equalities policy
Risk assessment health and safety performance standard HSPS01
Incident Illness Report Guidance
Grievance/Disciplinary Policy and Procedures
Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure
Drugs and Alcohol at Work Policy
Managing Performance Policy

Contact
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Human Resources and Organisational Development
Plymouth City Council
Civic Centre
Plymouth
PL1 2AA
Tel: 01752 312523
Fax: 01752 304900
Email: healthandsafety@plymouth.gov.uk

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