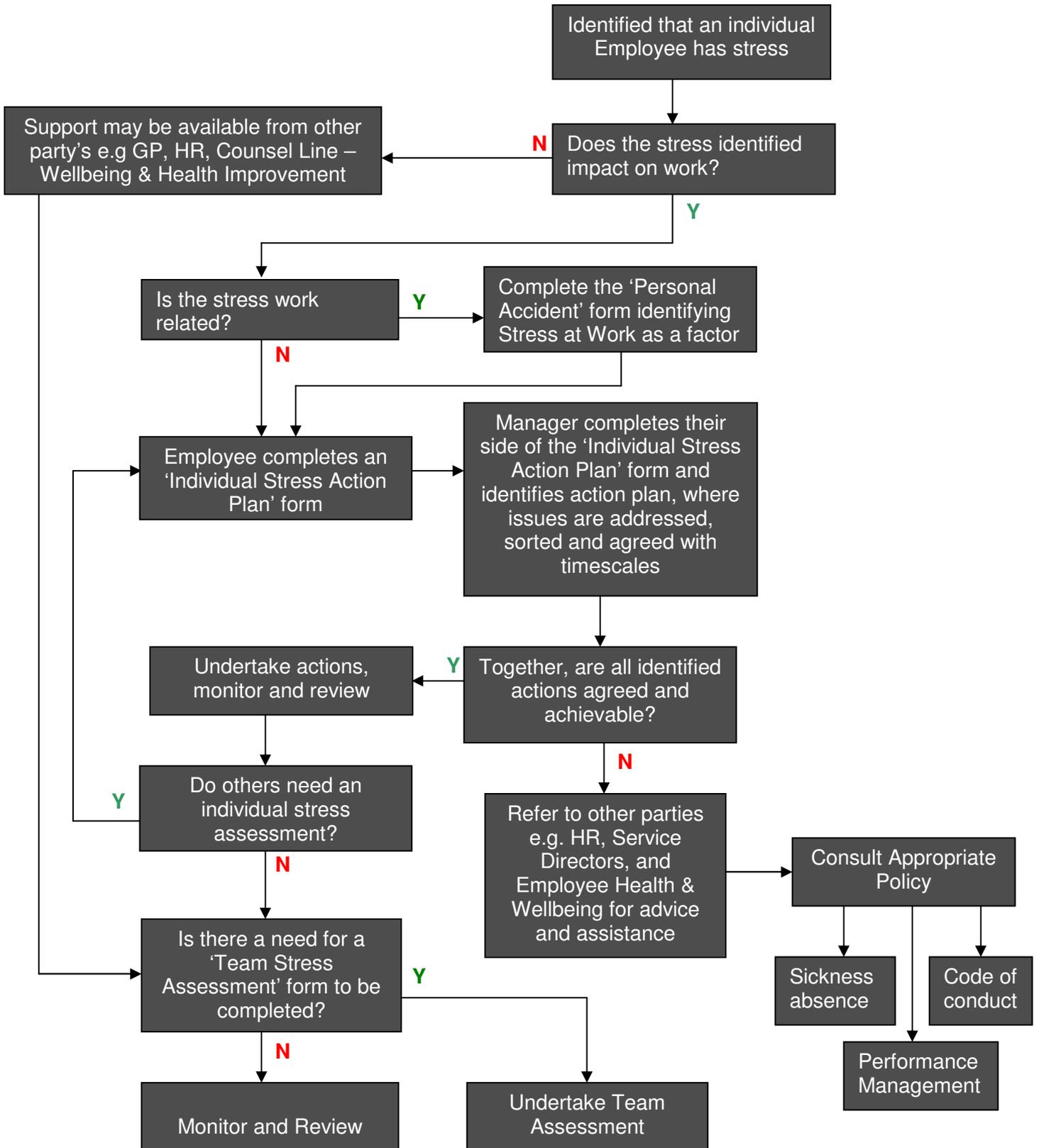


Flowchart – Individual Stress Management

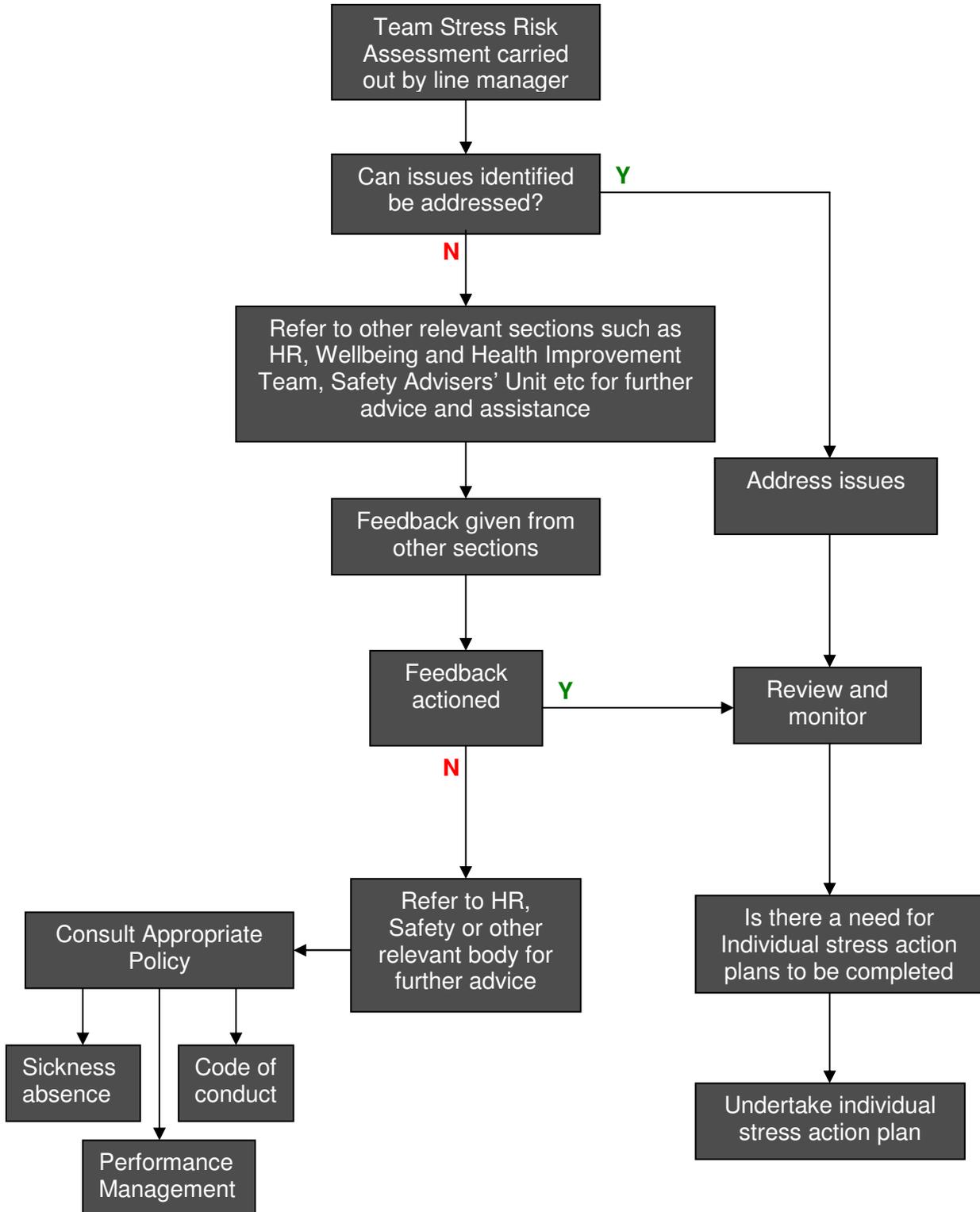
To be used in conjunction with Guidance and Information Sheet no. 9 ‘Assessment of Stress at Work’.

Where an employee identifies stress the following flow chart should be followed.



Flowchart – Team Risk Stress Management

The team stress risk form is to be used to support managers where a service area has an identified problem with stress and controls and further actions need to be formally identified.



Nottingham City Council values Diversity!

Nottingham City Council believes and recognises that the diversity of Nottingham's communities is a huge asset that should be valued and seen as one of the City's great strengths.

The people who live, work, study in or visit Nottingham, have diverse backgrounds and circumstances. They are of all ages, races and ethnic backgrounds, disabled and non-disabled, are from faith and non faith backgrounds, and the City has a vibrant lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender community. People live in a range of different types of household and have access to widely differing levels of income. As a City there are extremes of wealth with some areas of Nottingham being amongst the most deprived in the country.

Our diverse community is a great asset to our City. However, some communities experience disadvantage and discrimination that has a negative effect on their quality of life. Although this can affect all communities, most often it affects women, black and minority ethnic communities, disabled people, young and old people, lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgender people.

As one of the largest employers in Nottingham and one of the main providers of local services, the City Council is committed to providing equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination, harassment and intimidation, and disadvantage. We are also committed to achieving the highest standards in service delivery, decision-making and employment practice. This policy reinforces our responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure equality of opportunity for all sections of the community and our workforce, and in particular our general and specific duties:

General Duty

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Specific Duty

- To publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty, and
- To prepare and publish equality objectives.

The equality objectives contained within the Corporate Plan and associated action plans, outline the specific steps Nottingham City Council will take to achieve these duties. These can be found on the Council's website <http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=5036> or contact a member of the team.

To protect the City's diversity, Nottingham City Council **will not** tolerate less favourable treatment of *anyone* on the grounds of their:

- Gender
- Age
- Race
- Colour
- Nationality
- Ethnic or national origin
- Disability
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Responsibility for dependents
- Trade union or political activities
- Religious or other beliefs
- or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified

This policy is endorsed by the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council.

In making equalities a part of every day working practice, we will:

Use our influence and purchasing power to help make equality a reality for all and to tackle the prejudice, discrimination and disadvantage which occurs in the City. This will include ensuring that the organisations we buy services from or provide funding to operate similar policies and practices on equality and diversity.

Seek to ensure that our workforce reflects the diverse communities we serve and that every colleague is treated fairly during the whole of their working life. This will be achieved through regular monitoring of our workforce and equal pay audits.

Take action to **eradicate discrimination and inequality** when delivering services, when employing others to deliver services on our behalf and when providing funding to others to provide services to the people of Nottingham. Everyone who uses our services will be treated in a professional manner, with courtesy, respect and dignity.

Adopt legal, national and local guidelines, relevant legislation, codes of practice and City Council policies or strategies that seek to ensure equality of opportunity and promote good relations between all the communities of Nottingham.

Evaluate and monitor the impact of our policies, services and functions on communities through regular consultation, and make changes to them where they impact unfairly or adversely on any group/s. These changes will be outlined in our Equality & Diversity reports which will be made publicly available.

Make equalities the responsibility of everyone, including every elected Councillor, every colleague and every representative of the City Council.

Carry out Equality Impact Assessments before making important decisions to consider the potential impact on citizens, communities and colleagues – including early consultation with colleague and community representatives wherever possible.

Set challenging equality objectives and targets in relation to employment, service delivery and the carrying out of our functions.

Share information and experience of good practice on equality through links with other public, private, voluntary and community organisations in the City.

Use the “Social Model of Disability” as the basis for our work to promote equality of opportunity for and to tackle discrimination against disabled people.

Continue to **work closely with Trade Unions and colleague networks and community representatives** to develop our Equality and Diversity Policy and action plans.

For Nottingham citizens we will:

Make our buildings and services accessible to all the citizens of Nottingham.

Make our public information accessible to all the citizens of Nottingham, providing alternative formats, interpretation and sign language services where necessary.

Work with our partners and stakeholders to **stamp out all forms of bullying, harassment and intimidation**.

Work with Nottingham's diverse communities to tackle disadvantage and discrimination through consultation and involvement.

Consider the needs of all communities in the methods we use for communicating with citizens, colleagues and residents.

Use our standing in the City to **help shape public opinion** to promote equality within Nottingham.

For our Colleagues we will:

Raise awareness and train our colleagues to carry out this policy.

Take positive action to ensure that people from groups currently under-represented in our workforce are encouraged to obtain employment with us.

Promote a good work-life balance and opportunities to work flexibly.

Make reasonable adjustments to support disabled colleagues.

Allow paid leave of absence, with managerial permission, to attend the authorised Colleague Support Networks for Disabled, Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT) colleagues.

Take action to **eradicate discrimination and inequality** amongst colleagues and work to ensure that everyone is treated in a professional manner, with courtesy, respect and dignity.

What to do if something goes wrong

Citizens of Nottingham

If you think we are not providing a service in line with this policy or you think you have been treated unfairly in any way, you can complain to the City Council. Our Complaints Procedure explains how you can do this. You can obtain a copy of this procedure by telephoning 0115 87 64943, or emailing equalityanddiversityteam@nottinghamcity.gov.uk. You can make a complaint by telephoning or by writing to the Department or part of the City Council you are unhappy with.

City Council colleagues

If you are concerned about any equality issues relating to your employment you can speak to your line manager, or to your Department's Human Resources (Performance and Change) Team.

If you feel embarrassed, humiliated, offended, distressed, alarmed, apprehensive or fearful because of someone else's behaviour towards you, you have the right to make a complaint and ask for the behaviour to be stopped. The City Council's Harassment and Discrimination Policy and Procedure explains how to do this and how you can get support from the Mediation Service. You can find out more information by speaking to your Department's Human Resources representative or from the City Council's Intranet.

You also have the right to take up issues through the Grievance Procedure. You can obtain information about this procedure from your line manager, your Department's Human Resources representative, or the City Council's Intranet.

Alternatively, you can contact the PAM Employee and Assistance Programme for free counselling support and practical advice on **0800 882 4102**.

If you are in a Trade Union, you can contact them for advice and support. Please refer to your local Trade Union representative for more details.

Let us know what you think!

This policy will be monitored for effectiveness through regular reviews, however If you wish to make any comments or suggestions on the work we are aiming to do please contact the Equality & Diversity Team on

Tel: 0115 87 64952

Email: equalityanddiversityteam@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

If you require this information in an alternative language, large font, Braille, audio tape or text only version please call the Equality & Diversity Team on 87 64952

www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Stress at work

Employee Information Sheet

Introduction

This document contains general information and guidance for colleagues on the management of stress at work.

What is work related stress?

There is a difference between stress and pressure. We all experience pressure on a daily basis, and need it to motivate us and enable us to perform at our best. It's when we experience too much pressure without the opportunity to recover that we start to experience stress. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE)'s definition of stress is 'the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them'.

We can all feel stressed at times when we feel as though everything becomes too much, when things get on top of us, or when we feel as though we are unable to cope. It affects us in different ways at different times and is often the result of a combination of factors in our personal and working lives.

Work related stress can be tackled by working with your manager to identify what issues are making you feel stressed and agreeing realistic and workable ways to tackle these.

Recognising stress

Some of the common signs that may be linked to stress in individuals are:

- Persistent or recurrent moods – anger, irritability, detachment, worry, depression, guilt and sadness.
- Physical sensations/effects – aches and pains, raised heart rate, increased sweating, dizziness, blurred vision, skin or sleep disorders, frequent colds and infections, indigestion, diarrhoea, or constipation.
- Changed behaviour – increased absence levels, difficulty concentrating or remembering things, inability to switch off, loss of creativity, making more errors, double checking everything, eating disorders, lying to cover up mistakes, an increased use of alcohol, tobacco or drugs, becoming insular, being easily bored or fatigued.

How can I help tackle workplace stress?

As an employee, you have a duty to take reasonable care of yourself and others with regard to health and safety at work.

You should:

- Familiarise yourself with the City Council's Stress management policy and toolkit
- Support the City Council's stress initiatives.
- Communicate openly and honestly with your manager and team colleagues.
- Attend appropriate training which can help you recognise and manage pressure and stress in yourself and others.
- Support your colleagues if they are experiencing work related stress and encourage them to talk to their manager, or trade union representative.
- Identify causes of stress in the workplace and report them appropriately to your Line

Manager.

What should I do if I'm becoming stressed?

- Try to identify the causes and what you can do to make things better.
- Ideally, speak up if you're experiencing a problem, and talk to your manager to find a solution. If your stress is work-related, this will give them the chance to help and prevent the situation getting worse. Even if it isn't work related, they may be able to do something to reduce some of your pressure that you are feeling when you are at work.
- Help your manager to help you. To put effective plans in place, your manager will need information from you, so if you complete stage one of the [Stress action plan](#), this will help you take an active part in any discussions.

If the source of pressure is your Line Manager, you can speak to someone you feel confident in talking to, or ask someone to mediate. Other alternatives may be, another manager, an HR colleague or a trade union representative.

You may be reluctant to talk about stress at work from fear that you may be seen as weak, but feeling stressed is not a failing; it can happen to anyone.

A free, confidential counselling service is available to all City Council colleagues. The service is provided by an external counselling organisation. They provide telephone and face-to-face counselling and can be contacted by ringing **INSERT BUPA HELPLINE NUMBER**.

It is important to take action at a personal level and to review your lifestyle to see if you can identify any contributing factors. These might include:

- eating on the run;
- smoking, or drinking excessively;
- rushing, hurrying, being available to everyone;
- doing several jobs at once;
- missing breaks,
- taking work home with you;
- having no time for exercise and relaxation.

In some cases, prolonged stress can lead to physical and/or mental ill health. If you think you are currently experiencing stress-related ill health you may benefit from a discussion with your GP.

Further information

Additional information on stress can be found on the following websites:

www.hse.gov.uk/stress/
www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/

Stress at Work - Good Management Practice

Issue	Suggestions for further actions
<p>Are there possible issues with excessive job demands?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People unable to take leave entitlement? - People regularly working longer than their contracted hours? - People regularly working longer than 48 hours per week? - Individuals working noticeably longer hours than others doing the same/similar jobs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hold regular team meetings and one-to-one's to discuss and anticipate workload. - Develop personal work plans to ensure employees know what their job involves. - Provide training to help employees prioritise, or information on how to seek help if they have conflicting priorities. - Develop a system to notify employees of unplanned tight deadlines and any exceptional need to work long hours. - Identify reasons for tight deadlines appearing and seek to resolve issues - Ensure the job description matches the work being carried out. - Ensure the person specification matches the requirements of the job. - Introduce flexibility in work arrangements to enable employees to cope with domestic commitments.
<p>Are there possible issues with lack of control over work?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do employees have any control over the timing and/or pace of work? - Do others often change deadlines? - Is all work allocated by the line manager? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agree systems that enable employees to have a say over the way their work is organised and undertaken. - Hold regular discussions at the planning stages of projects to talk about outputs and methods of working. - Talk about how decisions are made – is there scope for more involvement? - Hold work reviews to monitor ongoing workload.
<p>Are there possible issues with lack of support?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employees raising concerns about a lack of management support? - Appraisals and work reviews are not taking place as planned? - Absence due to stress taken seriously and handled in line with sickness absence procedures? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hold regular team meetings and/or one-to-ones to talk about emerging issues. - Seek examples of how employees would like to, or have received good support from managers or colleagues. - Ask how individuals would like to access managerial support. - Ensure appraisals to identify training needs are carried out regularly. - Disseminate information on other areas of support (counselling, work-life balance, etc.) - Talk about the ways the organisation could provide support for someone who is experiencing problems outside work.
<p>Are there possible issues with relationships within the team?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have there been any complaints of bullying or harassment during the past year? - Have there been any incidents of unacceptable behaviour? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agree standards with employees for acceptable behaviour at work. - Ensure employees are aware of confidential routes by which they can report unacceptable behaviour. - Provide training to help employees handle difficult situations. - Ensure employees are aware of where they can access bullying, harassment and grievance procedures. - Ensure employees are aware of grievance and disciplinary procedures

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the team work cohesively and supportively in dealing with day-to-day work? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify ways to celebrate success. - Explore team building exercises
<p>Are there possible issues with role ambiguity or confusion?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employees mentioning conflicting goals? - Employees not prioritising correctly? - Induction for new employees not being completed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use appraisals and one-to-one meetings to help employees clarify their roles and priorities, and to discuss any possible role conflicts. - Communicate key team objectives and targets. - Agree standards of performance for jobs and individual tasks. - Develop personal work plans that are aligned to the outputs of the unit. - Revise job descriptions to ensure core priorities of the post are clear. - Ensure existing team members understand the role and responsibilities of any new team members. - Ensure new employees receive an adequate induction into their role and objectives, and the team's role.
<p>Are there possible issues with managing change?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Section/team/unit has been through a period of significant change. - Section/team/unit is about to go through a period of significant change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure employees are aware of why change is happening and the key steps of the change. - Ensure employees directly affected are involved in the change process. - Ensure regular and clear communication with those indirectly affected. - Agree methods of communication/update. - Ensure employees are aware of the impact of change on their jobs, terms and conditions, etc. - Have an 'open door' policy to help employees that have concerns. - Review work plans and objectives after change to ensure they are valid and clear. - Ensure receive relevant training for new changed/roles

HEALTH AND SAFETY

GUIDANCE & INFORMATION SHEET No. 9



Nottingham
City Council

Corporate Safety Advice
Raising Standards Safely 

Date: May 2012

Issue: No. 2

Subject: Assessment of Stress at Work

Introduction

This Guidance and Information Sheet forms part of Nottingham City Council's written safety policy arrangements. Departments may decide to add to this information sheet with specific guidance and systems of work relevant to departmental activities. Where proposals, additional guidance or changes to systems of work will have an impact on health, safety and welfare, there must first be consultation with Trade Union Safety Representatives via Departmental Health Safety and Welfare Committees.

If you have any questions, would like further information or would like this Guidance and Information Sheet in another format please contact Corporate Safety Advice.

What is Stress?

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) define stress as:

“the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them”.

This statement makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health.

The People Management handbook gives more information on the definition of stress.

This information can be accessed using the following link:

<http://gossweb.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/ncceextranet/index.aspx?articleid=10496>

Legal Framework

The Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 places a duty of care on employers to provide and maintain safe systems of work and a working environment which is, as far as is reasonably practical, safe and without risks to health.

The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 place a duty of care to assess significant risks to health & safety and, where these risks cannot be eliminated, implement control measures to minimise or reduce risks.

This duty extends to the identification of stress hazards including the assessment of risks and implementation of control measures in relation to stress at work (where risks exist) and ensuring that a suitable risk assessment has been completed.

How Does Nottingham City Council Manage Stress?

The aim of this guidance is to enable managers to be able to undertake a suitable risk assessment of stress when it has been identified. Nottingham City Council has developed this guidance and information to work alongside the stress policy and guidance located within the people Management handbook.

The 2 primary risk assessment forms can be found within the Corporate Safety Manual are:

- The 'Team Stress Risk Assessment' form which must be completed by the line manager as a result of concerns raised or identified from colleagues or the team and considers the potential for stress within a service area or team.
- Individuals must also be encouraged to report stress and when this occurs, they are required to fill in an 'Individual stress Action Plan' form. This document enables and formalises the discussion between the individual and their line manager or another appropriate representative. Support will be given when it is not the individuals direct line manager by the line manager's manager, Human Resources and or Union representative. In all cases the line manager will be encouraged to be the first point of contact as they will ultimately be the person to assist with the issues.

Team Stress Assessment

The 'Team Stress Risk Assessment' needs to be undertaken by the Manager who has undertaken suitable training, in conjunction with the other colleagues in the team. The findings of this assessment can be used by line managers in identifying and addressing potential stress related issues within their service area. This assessment form helps to ensure that line managers review current issues and address concerns.

The Team Stress Risk Assessment may be completed as a result of:

- The manager having concerns due to increased sickness levels, symptoms of stress, trends, feedback from team meetings
- When more than 1 member of a team has completed an Individual Stress Action Plan.

Corporate Safety Advice will be able to offer support on the process of completing this form however, the Wellbeing and Health Improvement Team can only deal with individuals suffering stress and managers can not refer teams as a whole.

The team stress assessment can then identify additional controls that may be required to remove or reduce the potential for stress within that team.

Where an assessment is required due to a service redesign / restructure, a specific assessment form based on the team stress assessment has been developed to support this process. Please ensure that it is completed prior to the start of the service redesign / restructure process.

Individual Stress Action Plan

The 'Individual Stress Action Plan' is the method by which an employee and their manager or an alternative representative can consider the issues around personal stress. This document may then be used to identify potential solutions.

The form, when completed by the employee identifies the issues which are causing them stress and assists the manager in addressing the concerns and creating an action plan.

An Individual stress action plan will be completed by the employee as a result of:

- The manager identifying that an individual is showing symptoms of stress
- Where the manager considers the work may present an additional or high risk of stress
- Where individual concerns are identified in the 'Team Stress Risk Assessment'.
- The individual reports stress and completes their side of the 'Personal Accident Report Form'

All individual stress Action Plans must be discussed by the employee and the Line Manager, where an individual requires a colleague or union representative, this can be an option. Feedback must be given to the employee, so it is clear what is expected of the employee and the systems that are in place to maintain their safety. The documents will be held with the individual, the line manager and / or Human Resources / safety or union representative.

It is important to recognise that where the employee is not at work, but has identified stress as a cause of absence, arrangements must be made to get the individual to complete the individual stress action plan.

If in the event the employee does not accept the manager's viewpoint of symptoms of stress, a manager should proceed to complete the form as they have a duty of care to the individual. The manager must keep a copy on file that the individual does not agree, but actions can still be addressed in relation to changes in working practices. A copy of the form must be given to the individual for their information and the matter must be referred to Human Resources, the Service Director or Employee Health & Wellbeing for further advice and assistance.

Training

To assist in the completion of both the team and individual stress assessments, training on how to undertake and complete risk assessments is necessary. It is a requirement that all managers have received training or advice prior to completing either stress assessment form. Both the formal training and advice is available from Corporate Safety Advice.

Reporting Stress

Where stress is attributed to work or has an impact on work, it must be reported in line with the City Councils current incident reporting systems.

Where the cause is identified as a working activity, you must follow the online accident reporting system, the injury must be identified as 'Stress – Work Related' and the Injury location as 'Non Physical Injury'. Management will also be required to upload a copy of the completed stress action plan to the accident system as part of the investigation process but this document must be identified as **not shareable**

Where the cause of stress follows a violent incident, it must be reported using the violent incident reporting system

Any incident that is considered as bullying, harassment, discrimination, victimisation or is a colleague against colleague violent incident must be reported in line with 'Making a complaint of bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation' - Guidance to the Grievance Procedure'. More detailed information on this is located within the 'People Management Handbook' and further information can be found using the following link:

<http://gossweb.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/nccextranet/index.aspx?articleid=10817>

Please note that any incident recorded using either the accident or violence reporting systems will be removed and the injured person will be informed and they will be directed to report the incident using the grievance procedure for action.

It is also important to recognise that at this time, stress is **not** reportable to the Health & Safety Executive under RIDDOR 95 even where the employee has been off work for over 7 days.

Further Information and References

- Working together to reduce work related stress (A Guide for Employees) leaflet (HSE)
- Nottingham City Council 'People Management handbook' – 'Stress Policy'
- Nottingham City Council 'People Management handbook' – 'Stress Guidance Policy'
- Nottingham City Council 'People Management handbook' – 'Making a complaint of bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation - Guidance to the Grievance Procedure'
- Healthy Work force Strategy - Well being Policy
- The Stress Management Society – (www.stress.org.uk)
- 'Tackling work-related stress – a managers' guide', HSE Books 2001
- 'Help on work-related stress – a short guide', HSE Books INDG281 11/2000
- 'Tackling work-related stress – a guide for employees', HSE Books ING341 6/2001
- 'Work stress – a brief guide for line managers', Loss Prevention Council SHE 16: 1998

Individual Stress Action Plan

Part 1 – For completion by the employee



Nottingham
City Council

What is your view of the current situation?	Please try to provide evidence of specific examples	Planning for the future	
		The most significant issues that the individual wishes to be addressed	Individual's proposals about how each of these issues should be addressed

Individual Stress Action Plan

Part 2 – For Completion By The Employee's Line Manager, or Their Manager



**Nottingham
City Council**

Summary of actions proposed by employee	Actions to be taken by management	Explanations of reason for any inaction	Review date for each action and details of progress at that date

Employee's signature:	Date:	Manager's signature	Date:
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Individual Stress Action Plan - Guidance

Criteria for Use

The individual Stress Action Plan is a tool which enables employees to identify the issues which have caused them to experience increased levels of stress, and to work with their Manager toward solutions which help reduce this risk. The circumstances in which this tool must be used are;

- If an individual reports difficulties in coping with their work and/or personal life
- If the individual is absent from work and reports experiencing increased stress, or stress related illness
- If the Manager identifies a pattern of sickness absence, and feels that this may be stress related
- If the Manager is concerned about the individuals performance at work and feels that this may be stress related

NB: If the Manager does have concerns that the individual may be experiencing increased stress, this must be confirmed with the employee before initiating use of the Stress Action Plan. If a concern remains it is recommended that advice is sought from Wellbeing and Health Improvement team

Notes for Employees

The overall aim of the Stress Action Plan process is for individual employees and their managers to investigate the causes of (and solutions to) stress together. It is not a blaming opportunity, but rather a chance to reflect upon the situation and the circumstances around it, and to identify how to reach a satisfactory outcome (e.g. if individuals are off work - that they are able to return to work). Approaching it in this way means that employees can play a major part in clearly identifying the issues involved, and how these issues could be addressed.

Where it is not appropriate to return the form back to their line manager, a nominated person must be formally identified to whom the form will be returned.

The first stage of the Stress Action Plan process is for the individual concerned to complete Part 1 of the Stress Action Plan Form. They should not complete it with their line manager, but either complete it alone or with the support of another person (e.g. Personnel, Safety or Trade Union Representative, etc.).

NB. It is important that individuals using this tool are as specific as possible with the information and examples they provide.

Employee's Perceptions of Stressors

Individuals should write down their perceptions/feelings about the situation (e.g. no one listens to me, can't cope with workload, no one interested, no support from manager, etc.). Simple statements such as 'I feel stressed' will not enable the 'Stress Action Plan' approach to be successful.

Employees are encouraged to seek advice and support from their Trade Union Health & Safety Representative.

Evidence of Perceptions

Individuals should provide examples of how they have arrived at their perceptions (e.g. instances that have led them to feel that they have no support from their manager).

The future

Individuals should then write down the most significant issues in their work situation that they would want to see addressed (using examples from the evidence column), and how they would like these issues to be resolved.

Non-work factors

Individuals should also document any non-work issues that are causing / contributing to their stress and how the organization may be able to help them with those issues.

Notes for Line Manager's or Employee Representative

Summary of actions proposed by employee

Each of the actions requiring action and identified by the employee needs to be summarised and put in order of importance

Actions to be taken by management

Using the actions proposed, each action needs to be individually considered and comment on what action will be introduced and has been introduced to address the concerns raised.

Explanations of reason for any inaction

Identify specific reasons for why actions are not going to be resolved or addressed

Review date for each action and details of progress at that date.

Identify a suitable review date for each of the actions identified and then at the review date, identify the actions that have been introduced. If the actions are not completed, identify what further actions are proposed with review date

Levels of Stress Management

Level 1 - Prevention

Activity at this level should address the potential sources of stress at work. The aim should be to identify where work-related stress is most likely to occur and take action to minimise the risk or to remove identified risks where this is reasonably practicable.

It may be appropriate to undertake a team stress risk assessment, to determine the nature and scale of the risk to health. It will then be necessary to communicate the results to the team and any actions that have been agreed..

This approach must be used when the team is about to, or has experienced significant changes to the structure of their work. For example, a potential restructuring, a change of working environment or changes to roles within a team.

Team Based Preventative Stress Risk Assessments

The City Council Team Stress Assessment form should be used to undertake a group/team based, preventative stress risk assessment. The risk assessment covers the seven sources of work-related stress identified by the HSE.

The stress risk assessment can be completed using a number of routes. For example; at team meetings, on 'Away' days, using individuals' views collated from appraisals, one to one supervision sessions etc. Following the completion of the risk assessment managers should share any remedial actions to the group/team. Managers should also discuss the findings of the risk assessment with their immediate Line Manager.

A list of issues and suggestions of Good Management Practice for Team Assessments are included at [Appendix A](#)

It must be recognised that colleagues may have difficulty raising their personal concerns in a group setting. If the risk assessment is completed in this environment, managers should ensure that colleagues are aware that they can raise personal issues with their manager on a one to one basis.

Please note. The Team Stress risk assessment form is not designed to be used to carry out reactive and/or personal stress risk assessments. If a personal stress risk assessment is necessary, an individual Stress Action Plan' should be developed.

HSE Management Standards Stress Indicator Tool

An alternative approach to team-based stress risk assessments is to use the HSE's Stress Indicator Tool. The Tool is an on-line questionnaire that can be completed on an individual and confidential basis.. This is then followed up by focus groups where employees are encouraged to discuss the findings of their individual survey and identify practical improvements.

Background information is available from the [HSE's website](#). Managers considering using the Tool should contact the Corporate Safety Advisors Team who can be contact by email on corporatesafetyadvice@nottinghamcity.gov.uk for further advice and support.

Reviewing Assessments

Team based stress risk assessments must always be reviewed:

- As soon as there are developments to suggest that they are no longer valid (e.g. an individual reports absence due to stress).
- Where there has been a significant change to the work environment (e.g. at the early stages of a new organisational review involving the team).

It is advised that stress risk assessments are formally reviewed at least once every eighteen months, unless there is a need to review them sooner. Review does not necessarily mean carrying out a new risk assessment, but checking the existing one to ensure it is still valid and that any changes are reflected in the risk assessment.

Further Practical Advice for Managers

Practical actions relevant to managers at all levels, which can help to avoid or minimise the impact of stress are given below:

1. Speak to the colleagues you manage.

- Do all your colleagues have equal access to information, briefings, etc.? Consider any colleagues who regularly work from home, , those on temporary/fixed term contracts or who work on a part time basis.
- Do you share information with your colleagues and ensure you don't keep 'bad news' secret?
- Do you remember to pass on all the briefings and information that you receive?

2. Make sure team meetings happen.

- Only rearrange them if absolutely necessary. Never cancel them without rearranging.

3. Make sure that all colleagues you line manage have their Performance Appraisal.

- Have you undertaken performance appraisal training? Consider your own training needs in this area.
- Do you consider the individual's training needs at their appraisal?
- Do you ask about things that stop them working as effectively as they could?
- Are you and the individual clear about priorities? Do you and the individual understand how their priorities relate to the overall priorities of the team and service?

4. Have regular '1-2-1s' with your team members.

- Ensure you allocate time for '1-2-1s' to take place.

- Only rearrange them if absolutely necessary. Never cancel one without rearranging.
 - Always cover workload issues, and discuss and clarify priorities.
- 5. Know what to do if one of your team members tells you they are 'stressed'.**
- Make sure you know how to use the 'Stress Action Plan' tool.
- 6. Intervene quickly and positively if someone is absent due to stress.**
- **Do not** avoid contact with a team colleague who is off work due to stress.
 - Quickly starting and maintaining contact with absent colleagues is especially important if their stated reason for absence is stress.
 - If they are unwilling to be in contact with you, speak to an Employee Casework Advisor in HR about alternative contact arrangements.
- 7. Be flexible.**
- If someone has something going on in their home life that is affecting their work, consider what the Council has in place to help, even if on a short-term or temporary basis.

Level 2 – Recognition

Activity at this stage should focus on detecting stress amongst colleagues, eliminating or reducing the work factors contributing to the situation and providing support.

It is important that Line Managers ensure:

- that there is a working environment in which stress can be discussed openly and frankly is encouraged
- they have an awareness and are able to recognise and identify colleagues suffering from excessive levels of stress
- that they give any colleague exhibiting warning signs of stress an opportunity to discuss their problems in a sympathetic and constructive atmosphere. (see Colleague [Stress Action Plan](#))

Symptoms and Warning Signs

Some of the common signs of stress are:

- Persistent or recurrent moods – anger, irritability, detachment, worry, depression, guilt or sadness.
- Changed behaviour – difficulty concentrating or remembering things, inability to switch off, loss of creativity, making more errors, erratic timekeeping, loss of motivation, neglect of personal appearance, double checking everything, eating disorders, becoming accident prone, increased use of alcohol, tobacco or drugs.
- Relationships at work – conflict between colleagues, poor relationships with clients or other stakeholders
- Physical sensations/effects – aches and pains, raised heart rate, increased sweating, dizziness, blurred vision, skin or sleep disorders.

When these symptoms are short-lived, generally they cause no lasting harm. Where pressures are intense or continue for some time, the effect can be more sustained and can be damaging to long term health.

Managers should also be aware of the following warning signs relating to sickness absences:

- Increase in overall sickness absence – particularly frequent short-term absences.
- Going home ill during the working day
- Long term ill health
- Psychological problems

What Action should you take?

When the warning signs of stress are identified, an appropriate manager should use the stress action plan process, which is a reactive tool, for investigating the perceived causes of stress in a colleague.

There may be occasions when it is necessary to reactively investigate the causes of an individual's stress. For example:

- When investigating the causes of sickness absence due to stress, or when planning a phased return to work after sickness absence due to stress (particularly long-term sickness absence).
- As a result of a proactive 'team based stress risk assessment', which has highlighted potential stress issues amongst particular colleagues.
- During an incident investigation, following an individual reporting they are experiencing work-related stress or clearly exhibiting signs of stress.

Occasionally, in cases of work related stress, colleagues may refuse to co-operate with the process. In those circumstances, every effort should be made to encourage the colleague to enter into a dialogue with their Line Manager. If the colleague refuses to do this, they can suggest an alternative person who they feel confident in talking to, or ask someone to mediate in the process. In such cases the manager should contact their Employee Case Work Adviser in the HR and Transformation team to discuss an alternative.

Colleague Stress Action Plans

The 'Stress Action Plan' tool is not intended to address the medical aspects of stress (e.g. clinical depression), which should be addressed through an Occupational Health (Employee Wellbeing) referral. However, it is intended to help identify and address personal and work issues that have led to the colleague's perceptions of stress.

The overall aim of the process is for the colleague and their Line Manager to investigate the causes of (and solutions to) stress together. This should not be used as an opportunity to apportion blame but rather a chance to reflect upon the situation and the circumstances around it, and to identify how to reach a satisfactory outcome (e.g. the colleague is able to return to work). Approaching this in the manner described below means the colleague plays a major part in identifying the issues that have resulted in their feelings of stress and how they may be addressed in the future.

NB. Additional guidance is provided, within this document, on stress and sickness absence including Occupational Health referrals.

Stage 1 – The Colleague's perceptions

The first stage of the process is for the colleague to complete Stage 1 of the [Stress Action Plan form](#).

Stage 2 – The manager’s response

Agreeing specific actions

The manager should first consider how they are going to respond to the issues that the colleague has raised. A face-to-face meeting should then be arranged between them and the colleague to discuss the planned actions to be taken.

The purpose of this meeting is to allow open and constructive communication between both parties and enable a two-way sharing of views in a transparent and positive way. If there is a valid reason why a face-to-face meeting is not appropriate, then the manager should respond in writing detailing the actions to be taken, including an offer to have a face-to-face meeting.

The manager should give objective consideration to the colleague’s ideas on how they wish to see any work-related issues resolved, including clarifying them with the colleague where this is necessary.

Both the colleague and manager must recognise that the manager needs to balance the colleague’s wishes with; the needs of the business, the potential effect on co-workers and the reasonable expectation that the colleague should be able to cope with the normal pressures of the job. In making their decisions, the manager should ensure they take account of any issues arising from the Equality Act. For example an employee with a medical condition that falls under the Equality Act may be affected adversely by stress levels as compared to a person without a condition recognised under the Equality Act. In these circumstances you may wish to contact Employee Wellbeing for advice.

Although the colleague’s requests cannot always be guaranteed, in most cases many requests can be achieved or a reasonable compromise or outcome reached. Managers should however, not agree to support unrealistic measures that cannot be sustained.

Documenting actions and review

Following the meeting with the colleague, the manager should document the actions agreed and the specific reasons why they are any that cannot be undertaken. A copy of the Stress Action Plan form should also be provided to the colleague. The manager and colleague should also agree review dates (no more than one month after the creation of the Plan) to discuss and review progress against the actions agreed.

Stress and Sickness Absence – Guide for Managers

The principles of reporting absence, undertaking Stress Action Plans, deciding on changes/adjustments can be applied to short-term stress related sickness absence as well as the long to medium term absence.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Council's [Attendance Management Policy in the People Management Handbook](#).

1. Make sure you report stress-related absences

It is a reasonable expectation that a colleague should notify you of their absence and why they are absent. They may not be willing or able to go into medical details, but it is a reasonable expectation that they tell you if their absence is stress-related and whether they think it is work-related.

If the colleague feels that their stress is work-related, ask them to complete an incident form. The form can be sent to their home, or if they say they feel unable to complete it, complete one on their behalf.

Be aware that other terms may be used for stress related absence (e.g. anxiety, depression, hypertension, panic attacks)

2. Ask the Colleague to complete a Stress Action Plan as soon as possible

As soon as you know that absence is stress-related, you should ask and encourage the colleague to complete Part 1 of the [Stress Action Plan](#)

If the colleague feels there are work issues, it is essential that these are identified as quickly as possible and responded to. If not, it will be far less likely that the individual will return to work quickly. Via a referral, Employee Wellbeing may be able to provide information on the individual's issues (if the employee consents to release that information), but the Stress Action Plan process should still take place in parallel with an Employee Wellbeing - Occupational Health (OH) referral.

If an individual refuses to speak to you about their issues, and there are no medical reasons for delaying the risk assessment process (which Employee Wellbeing will be able to advise on), you will need to be honest with the colleague that you won't be in a position to consider any adjustments to help them back to work.

3. Meet with the colleague as soon as possible and maintain contact

It is essential that you try to keep in touch. Managers can be hesitant about this in case they say the wrong thing or are perceived to be 'hassling' the individual to return to work – where in reality colleagues may be more concerned by a lack of contact. If there is little or no communication, misunderstanding and barriers can quickly arise. Then the colleague may then feel that they are not missed or valued and this can exacerbate already low self-esteem.

Arrange to meet with the colleague as soon as possible, ideally as soon as you become aware that the absence is likely to last longer than two weeks. Just

because the colleague is absent from work, should not prevent a meeting from taking place – often this is key to an early return to work being achieved.

The meeting should take place at their normal workplace, or if necessary a ‘neutral’ location. The aim of the meeting should be to identify the cause of the absence (e.g. any work-related issues) and provide support to facilitate an early return to work.

- Give the colleague chance to explain the problem and what is happening
- Ask if there is anything you can do to help
- Avoid putting pressure on them to divulge personal or medical information
- Remind them that a [confidential counselling](#) can be accessed
- Depending on the severity of the illness (and the operational context of the service), explore if a temporary half-way house between work and absence would help to achieve a full return to work. E.g. working from home for a few hours a day.

Don't know what to say?

- Ask open questions about what is happening, how they are feeling and what solutions they think there might be.
- How long have they felt like this? Is this an ongoing issue or something that immediate action might put right?
- Are there problems outside work that they might like to talk about or that it would be helpful for you to know about? (Recognise that they might prefer to talk to a confidential counsellor rather than yourself about non-work issues.)
- Are they aware of possible sources of support? e.g. confidential counselling.
- Is there any aspect of their medical care or condition that it would be helpful for you to know about? For example, side effects of medication that might impact on their work. (While you have no right to this information, the colleague should be aware that you can not make reasonable adjustments if you are not informed about the problem.)
- Do they have any ideas about short or longer-term adjustments to their work that may be helpful? (See ‘Decide what changes you can accommodate’ below.)

4. Do not assume the colleague wants no contact

It is not uncommon for someone suffering from a stress related illness to request no contact. The worst thing a manager can do is assume that this is the case, or accept it at face value and sever all contact with the employee. Research clearly shows that no contact hinders a person's recovery and reduces the chances of a return to work. It is essential that you try to keep in touch.

An employee may request no contact because they feel embarrassed about the way that they feel or are behaving – a sympathetic manner and treating the person normally can help overcome that. Sometimes the request for no contact arises because you, the manager, are perceived to be a factor.

In such circumstances consider offering the temporary services of an intermediary such as another manager, but also ensure the employee is made aware that they will need to re-engage with you at some point in the process.

Even if an individual is refusing contact with their manager, they may be in touch with their TU representative or work colleague. You should consider speaking to the relevant TU representative or work colleague to see if they can encourage the employee to maintain contact with the workplace.

5. Make an early referral to Occupational Health (Employee Wellbeing)

In cases of stress-related absence, a referral to OH should be made by the **3rd week of absence**. Therefore, you will need to make a referral as soon as you are aware that the absence will be more than one week (e.g. by referring to the timeframe given on their GP's 'fit note').

NB. The current Attendance Management Policy advises that normally a meeting should take place with the employee to discuss the referral. Recognising the need for a quick referral in stress-related cases, if this is not possible, the employee should still be sent notification of the referral and reason for referral by their manager.

NB. If a Stress Action Plan has been completed (or even only partially completed) include a copy with the referral. This should include the manager's response ('Part 2') if it is available.

Questions to consider asking Occupational Health include:

- What is the prognosis for their condition and how long is it anticipated to last?
- Is the individual receiving and following the correct treatment for their condition?
- What is the likelihood of a return to work within the next 'X' weeks/months? (A specific time period based on how long you can manage with the individual being absent, or the point at which employment decisions will have to be considered.)
- What is the effect of the condition on the individual, and their ability to carry out their job?
- In relation to the individual's condition (if any), please confirm:
 - What effect the condition has on the employee?
 - Is that effect substantial?
 - Is that effect long-term?
 - What effect it has on the employee's day-to-day activities?
 - Does the Equality Act Apply?

- In respect of their medical condition, what adjustments could be made to help the employee return to work?
- Would these adjustments be short or long-term? When should they be reviewed?
- Are there any management or work-related issues that the employee feels need to be resolved?
- Would a 'phased return to work' assist (or speed-up) a return to work?
In respect of a phased return, if the nature of the job can accommodate working from home would it assist the employee's return to work?

What can you expect from Employee Wellbeing

- An objective view on whether the employee's stress is work-related, not work-related, etc.
- Whether counselling (or other relevant treatment, such as Cognitive Behaviour Therapy) would be beneficial.
- Any suggested adjustments that should be considered (e.g. adjustment to working hours) and whether these adjustments are temporary or permanent.
- Whether there are management issues that need to be discussed with the employee.

What if a suggested adjustment can't be accommodated?

- Ultimately it is a management (not medical) decision about whether an adjustment can reasonably be accommodated.
- If a suggested amendment cannot be accommodated, the manager can go back to Employee Wellbeing, to explain why this is the case, but identify any similar adjustments that could be offered as an alternative.
- Employee Wellbeing will then review their opinion and advise on the likelihood of a return to work being achieved.

Will OH tell me what the employee thinks is the cause of the stress?

- If the employee gives consent, Employee Wellbeing will provide the employee's perceptions of what is causing their stress.
- If there are work-related issues, as a minimum, Employee Wellbeing will advise in their referral report that: 'There are work-related issues that need to be discussed with the employee. In order to achieve an early return to work, a meeting or meditation with the employee should take place.'

6. Don't avoid talking about any work-related issues

As part of normal attendance management processes, a meeting should be arranged with the individual to discuss the outcome of the referral to Employee Wellbeing. As identified earlier, the individual's absence from work should not prevent a meeting taking place.

Via the Stress Action Plan process the employee should be asked to identify any work-related issues and how they would want these issues resolved.

In some cases, it may be useful to consider if formal mediation could help to achieve resolution to the issues involved.

7. Decide what changes you can (or can't) accommodate

You should consider any factors that have contributed to their absence, which could reasonably be changed or accommodated. Where the employee's condition falls under the Equality Act there is a legal duty to consider reasonable adjustments. However, even where this is not the case, managers should consider if it is better to make some reasonable adjustments that will enable the employee to return to work.

You will need to be honest about the things you can change and those you can't, as well as adjustments you can make in the short-term (e.g. to assist a return to work) and what you are able to accommodate in the longer-term. Avoid automatically refusing adjustments; make sure you give potential adjustments proper consideration. [Reasonable adjustment guide](#)

Some organisational factors will be out of your control and you need to consider whether they can be mitigated.

Most adjustments are based on common sense about what might be helpful and what is possible. Remember you are not bound by external opinions (e.g. GP, Employee Wellbeing) and you can query any Employee Wellbeing advice you receive. The decision on what is 'reasonable' ultimately rests with management, although it is always preferable to try to seek agreement with the individual, even if ultimately agreement can't be reached.

The Stress Action Plan process should be largely complete by this stage. Write down what changes and adjustments can and can't be accommodated on that form.

8. Plan the return to work - Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation will generally be required following a period of sick leave caused by a stress-related illness. Activity at this stage should focus on supporting the individual until they become a fully effective member of the team once more.

Almost no-one is ever fully fit when they return to work after an illness (whether physical or mental). Waiting for people to be 100% fit for their work before allowing them back can therefore be unrealistic and it can lengthen absences unnecessarily.

Before the employee returns to work, discuss with them any adjustments needed to help their return. You can also discuss how their progress will be monitored.

As a manager you need to think about:

- Opportunities to work from home as part of the phased return to work
- Asking the colleague about coming back into the workplace before they begin their 'formal' return to work (e.g. to attend team meetings).
- Allowing time-off to attend any therapeutic sessions.
- Exploring different work options such as part-time, job-share, flexible working around agreed outputs.
- How long you can accommodate any changes or adjustments.

Employee Wellbeing input can be useful when planning a return to work

Be realistic about workloads – for example, some people will wish to prove themselves and may offer to take on too much. Set achievable goals that make them feel they are making progress, but that are incrementally aimed to get them back to 'business as usual'.

Avoid not dealing with their work whilst they have been off. Check whether a backlog of unfinished work has built up and take measures to reduce it to an acceptable level.

9. Maintain contact when they return to work

When the colleague returns, set aside time to brief them on what's been happening at work.

Take the opportunity to have frequent informal chats so there is an opportunity to discuss progress/problems without a formal (and possibly intimidating) session.

10. Review how the return to work is progressing

Talk to the colleague about options or ideas for further adjustments. Then talk realistically about the best way to move forward. For example, if all reasonable adjustments have been made in their current post, it may be necessary to consider transferring them to another job. Seek HR advice at this stage, especially if this could be a realistic future option.

As part of this process, review the Stress Action Plan, to ensure the identified actions are in place.

11. Don't remove adjustments you've put in place without stopping to think

You may have put adjustments in place while the person is progressing to 'business as usual'. Avoid withdrawing these adjustments without first speaking to the employee and seeking further advice from HR or Employee Wellbeing as necessary.

12. Try to avoid delaying disciplinary and/or capability proceedings

Stress-related absence can occur either during the investigation phase or because of an impending hearing. If disciplinary/capability processes are the cause of a stress-related absence, delaying the process further is unlikely to resolve the cause of stress.

Please refer to the Council's disciplinary procedure and speak to the HR casework team for further guidance and information.

If Employee Wellbeing advice is necessary, questions to consider asking OH (making sure you explain the circumstances of the referral) include:

- Is the employee medically fit to attend an investigation/hearing?
- If they are not currently medically fit, when are they likely to be?
- How may their illness affect their ability to participate in the investigation/hearing?
- What steps could be taken to accommodate the employee's illness in respect of the disciplinary investigation/hearing?

13. Is it a health issue or a performance issue?

Use normal procedures if it is a performance, attendance or conduct issue (as opposed to one primarily related to health or disability). If the

matter cannot be resolved you may have to use the relevant formal procedure (e.g. capability, attendance, etc.), which ultimately could lead to redeployment or termination.

Managing Stress

Roles & Responsibilities

As an Elected Member or Corporate Leadership Team Member I will-

- Demonstrate my commitment and support to this policy, by ensuring that the principles and approaches to managing stress are implemented
- Reflect the policy's principles and approaches in my management practice
- Provide adequate support to Line Managers in the implementation of this policy.

As a member of a Departmental Management Team I will-

- Ensure that stress related absence is monitored and reviewed regularly, at least annually, and discussed at Departmental Health, Safety and Welfare meetings. This will give the opportunity for potential contributory factors to be considered and actions identified in order to minimise the risk of stress.

As a Managers (at all Levels) I will-

- Ensure that work related pressures are discussed at team meetings so that concerns can be raised and responded to on a regular basis.
- Conduct and implement the recommendations of risk assessments within my area of control
- Ensure good communication between myself and colleagues, particularly where there are organisational changes
- Ensure colleagues are fully trained to undertake their duties and have meaningful development opportunities
- Ensure that colleagues have access to appropriate training on recognising stress and managing pressure and improving resilience
- Monitor workloads, working hours and whether colleagues are taking their full contractual (and flexi where appropriate) leave entitlement
- Attend training, as required, so I become more knowledgeable in good management practice and health and safety
- Ensure bullying and harassment is not tolerated within my area of responsibility
- Offer support to colleagues who are experiencing stress outside of work.

As a Colleagues I will-

- Support the Council's stress policy and procedures, including any on going initiatives that contribute towards raising the profile of Managing Stress in the Workplace
- Communicate openly and honestly with my manager and team colleagues

- Recognise that I may be a cause of stress to others, accept responsibility for and take action to deal with this
- Attend appropriate training to enable me to better recognise stress and to help support me and in turn help others to build up greater resilience.
- Identify causes of stress in the workplace and report them appropriately to my Line Manager
- Make use of opportunities to access confidential counselling when relevant or recommended.

As a Trade Union Representatives I will-

- Help promote and support stress initiatives in the workplace and to encourage full participation of colleagues
- Make colleagues aware of support mechanisms available to them
- Support the delivery of the stress policy and procedures in the workplace

Stress Interventions

Support for Managers' and Colleagues

The following support mechanisms are available:

- **Health and Safety** – To provide support and guidance on risk assessment processes and HSE guidance
- **Employee Wellbeing** – To provide medical advice and guidance on the impact of stress on employee's health and their work. To advise on the steps the City Council and/ or the colleague may take. Employee Wellbeing can also provide sessions on resilience.

Confidential Counselling

This is available through the Employee Assistance programme and further details can be found on the intranet. As well as providing support to individuals, the assistance programme can also offer assistance and advice to managers on how to help a colleague through a difficult event.

Further information on the information in this document can be obtained from Employee Wellbeing. Employee Wellbeing can be contacted via email – ewadmin@nottinghamcity.gov.uk or telephone 0115 8762953

Stress Policy Statement (People Management Handbook)

Nottingham City Council values its colleagues and accepts that it has a duty to take all reasonably practicable measures to manage stress in the workplace. This guidance outlines the principles, responsibilities and practical actions which the organisation can put in place to reduce the incidence of work related stress which may result in ill health.

The documents attached contains corporate standards and guidance on the management of stress at work.

It provides general information about managing work related stress and specific guidance about a structured approach to stress related aspects of health and safety risk assessments.

All colleagues have a duty to themselves and others to help minimise stress in the workplace and should take an active part in stress management initiatives.

Defining Stress

Stress and Pressure

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) defines stress as:

'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them'

Pressure, in one form or another, will be present in all jobs. Pressure and challenge, even when high, can be motivating and stimulating. Pressure that can be responded to effectively, is a factor in achieving job satisfaction. However, pressure at a level and a time where an individual cannot cope can lead to stress, as can too little pressure or challenge.

It should also be noted that individuals do not have a predisposition to stress. An individual's response will depend on the amount of pressure and their ability to cope at the time, and will therefore differ from person to person. However, no one can be regarded as being 'immune'.

Stress Management Policy & Principles

Nottingham City Council is responsible as an employer for the health, safety and welfare of its employees and recognises that employee wellbeing is important to its performance and service delivery, together with supporting people as valued colleagues.

The council aims to take positive measures to manage stress effectively and to create an environment where stress is prevented so far as is reasonably practicable; and that where it becomes a matter for a colleague, they are encouraged to seek support.

This policy is primarily concerned with stress arising from work, but the Council also recognises that events occurring outside of the work environment may also lead to stress that may have an impact upon a colleagues work. Therefore, colleagues should be given appropriate assistance whatever the cause.

Supporting Principles

The following principles apply to the City Council's approach to managing stress:

- The management of stress should be dealt with in a way that is non-discriminatory and in accordance with the Council's [Equality and Diversity policy](#).
- Colleagues should be dealt with fairly and consistently across the organisation.
- There should be a positive and preventative approach to stress, rather than a punitive one.
- Individual confidentiality will be respected.
- Open communication between managers and colleagues should be encouraged and promoted.

Health & Safety Executive (HSE) Management Standards

As part of the City Council's policy and approach to stress, the HSE management standards are recognised as being the desired goal for the prevention, minimisation and management of stress issues. Further information on the standards can be found on the [HSE website](#).

Stress Risk Assessment – Service Redesign



Section 1 : Summary

Service / Team:	Manager:
Trigger for completion of assessment:	
Using Information on this form is the Risk considered as : <input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High	
remove tracked changes	
Date of Assessment:	Target date for implementation of remedial measures:
Date for review of Assessment :	Signature of Manager:

Section 2 : Arrangements

With regard to this process: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ How do you get feedback from colleagues?➤ What arrangements are in place for your colleagues to inform you of their concerns?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 to 1's <input type="checkbox"/> Team Meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Performance Appraisals <input type="checkbox"/> Other communication (please specify below)_
Stressors related to this process: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Change – how organisational change is managed and communicated;2. Role – how well people understand their role in the organisation and whether they have conflicting roles;	
Support : <p>This assessment process should be considered at the start of the process so it clearly identifies key information, time frames and who will provide that support.</p> <p>In relation to this process, the most significant cause of stress is due to a lack of knowledge, information or understanding of the process and it is therefore critical that all persons involved in this process understand what will occur, how it will affect them and if any changes occur, systems will be in place to provide clear guidance and support as identified.</p>	

Section 3 : Performance On Each Stressor

Workforce Reduction and Change - During the Process

How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation:
You may need to review your procedures for consulting with staff prior to implementing any significant changes that impact upon individuals.

Who is identified as being the responsible Manager for this process and will ensure all colleague concerns are considered / addressed

Stressor	Yes	No	Comment/Action (describe actions to be taken)
Has a formal time frame for the process been identified and have all key dates been communicated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have colleagues been provided with timely information to enable them to understand the reasons for proposed changes;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have arrangements been made for colleagues to be consulted on changes and provided with opportunities to influence proposals;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have colleagues been provided with timely information to enable them to understand the impact of any changes to their jobs;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
How will colleagues be informed of timetables for changes;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have arrangements been made for colleagues to have access to support during the process?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Role

Whether people understand their role within the organisation both during the process and in the new structure.

You may need to encourage your staff to make you aware of any issues in this area.

Stressor	Yes	No	Comment/Action (describe actions to be taken)
Have all colleagues been informed of their role and responsibilities during this process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have your colleagues been provided with information to ensure they understand their current role and responsibilities;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is it clear what new requirements are to be placed on colleagues;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
If necessary, are arrangements made for colleagues to receive training to support any changes in their roles;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are colleagues aware of the procedure to follow to raise concerns;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Section 4 : Support

Whether people are equipped with the necessary skills, information, and support to carry out their jobs effectively in the new / proposed structure:

This requires managers to ensure that staff are equipped with the necessary skills and information to carry out their jobs effectively. Personal development plans could be one method of approach.

Stressor	Yes	No	Comment/Action (describe actions to be taken)
Do colleagues indicate that they receive adequate information and support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do colleagues understand the proposed structure and what options they will have;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do colleagues have clear guidance on how they will be supported during the transitional period;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have colleagues been given access to additional training, information or knowledge to assist them in transitional period;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Section 5 : Additional Information

Each process will be different with unique challenges and action that may be required to ensure the consultation and transition run effectively.

Additional concerns by colleagues regarding the process and outcome that have not been identified in this assessment that may create stress should be included below.

Concern	Proposed Action

Guidance Notes

This risk assessment is intended to help those with responsibility for colleagues to assess potential stress caused during the service redesign process and transitional period only.

Note: This document is not intended to risk assess the stress of an individual. Where an individual is felt, or reports to be at risk from increased stress, the manager must refer to the **Individual Stress Action Plan**.

Information on how to complete this form can be found within Guidance and Information Sheet No. 9 – “Assessment of Stress at Work”.

Prior to completing this form, managers need to understand the reasons for this assessment being completed and provide specific information or links to the process so it is clear and transparent.

Criteria for use

This Assessment shall be used when;

The Manager responsible is made aware of workforce changes that may lead to service redesign and prior to the process beginning;

Primarily, the focus of this assessment is to ensure that these significant changes to the structure of their work.

Completing the ‘Team Stress Risk Assessment’ Form

1. The term ‘manager’ refers to persons with responsibility for colleagues and in a large scale reviews may include several different people.
2. Please complete **Section 2: Arrangements**, answering the questions and identifying how communication will take place
3. Complete **Section 3: Performance** and **Section 4: Support** answering Yes or No to each of the questions in the table.
 - If you answer **No** to any question, then you **must** either indicate actions to be taken or at least comment on why the current situation is acceptable. If the answer is **Yes**, you should also use the actions section to explain what has been done to meet this requirement.
4. If required **Section 5: Additional Information** can be completed with any specific concerns or issues raised by both management and colleagues in relation to the process or transitional period.
5. You can now complete **Section 1: Summary** at the front of the assessment, including your estimate of the risk to your staff from stressors on the following basis:
 - **Low Risk** If all your responses to the questions are **Yes**. Current methods for controlling risk to health are adequate. Unlikely to cause harm to members of staff.
 - **Medium Risk** If you primarily responded **Yes** to the questions. Current methods for controlling risk to health are not fully adequate and may need improvement within an agreed time period and there may be some risk to colleagues.
 - **High Risk** If a majority of your responses to the questions are **No**. Current methods for controlling risk to health are not adequate and must be improved within an agreed time period and there will be risk to colleagues.
6. Share the results of the assessment with all affected colleagues, highlighting the arrangements that are in place and offering them the opportunity to provide you with feedback either direct to you or through a confidential channel such as a Trade Union or work colleague
7. This assessment may require review during the process as further information becomes available.
8. **Make sure you follow up on any identified actions.**

Team Stress Risk Assessment

Section 1 : Summary

Team:	Manager :
Trigger for completion of assessment :	
Using Information on this form is the Risk:	
Low / Medium / High (circle relevant category)	
Summary / additional comments :	
Date of Assessment :	Target date for implementation Of remedial measures :
Date for review of Assessment :	Signature of Manager :

Section 2 : Arrangements

With regard to the following stressors,	Comments / Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How do you get feedback from your staff? ➤ What arrangements are in place for your staff to inform you of their concerns? 	
<p>Stressors :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demands – Workload, work pattern and work environment, including exposure to physical hazards; 2. Control – how much say the person has in the way they do their work; 3. Relationships – includes promoting positive behaviors to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behavior; 4. Change – how organisational change is managed and communicated; 5. Role – how well people understand their role in the organisation and whether they have conflicting roles; <p>Support :</p> <p>whether people feel equipped with the necessary skills, information and support to carry out their jobs effectively;</p>	

Section 3 : Performance On Each Stressor

Demands

Includes issues like workload, work pattern and work environment, including exposure to physical hazards:

This is about developing a style of management and communication, which takes individuals and their needs into consideration

Stressor	Yes/No	Comment/Action (describe actions to be taken)
Do staff indicate that they are able to cope with the demands of their job;		
Do you provide employees with adequate and achievable demands in relation to the agreed hours of work;		
Are the skills and abilities of your staff matched to the demands of the job;		
Are jobs designed to be within the capabilities of employees;		
Do you address employees concerns about their work environment;		

Control

How much say the person has in the way they do their work:

This requires effective two-way communication and consultation with all staff. This should be readily achievable through existing channels such as informed discussions with supervisors/line managers, individual performance development reviews, open-door policies, team meetings

Stressor	Yes/No	Comment/Action (describe actions to be taken)
Do your staff indicate that they are able to have a say about the way they do their work;		
Do your staff have control over their pace of work, where possible,		
Do you encourage your staff to use their skills and initiative to do their work;		
Do you encourage your staff to develop their skills;		
Do you encourage your staff, where possible, to develop new skills to help them undertake new and challenging pieces of work;		
Do your staff have a say over when breaks can be taken;		
Do you consult your staff over their work patterns?		

Relationships

Includes promoting positive behaviors to avoid conflict, and dealing with unacceptable behavior:
You should bring policies and procedures for dealing with unacceptable behavior at work to the attention of all your staff as part of raising awareness.

Stressor	Yes/No	Comment/Action (describe actions to be taken)
Do your staff indicate that they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviors, e.g. bullying at work;		
Do you promote positive behaviors at work to avoid conflict and ensure fairness;		
Do your staff share information relevant to their work;		
Do you understand the systems that the Nottingham City Council has in place to enable and encourage managers to deal with unacceptable behavior;		
Do you draw to the attention of your staff the procedures they should follow to report unacceptable behaviour.		

Change

How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation:
You may need to review your procedures for consulting with staff prior to implementing any significant changes that impact upon individuals.

Stressor	Yes/No	Comment/Action (describe actions to be taken)
Do your staff indicate that the organisation engages them frequently when undergoing an organisational change;		
Are your staff provided with timely information to enable them to understand the reasons for proposed changes;		
Are your staff consulted on changes and provided with opportunities to influence proposals;		
Are your staff aware of the probable impact of any changes to their jobs. If necessary, are they given training to support any changes in their jobs;		
Are your staff aware of timetables for changes;		
Do your staff have access to relevant support during changes.		

Role		
Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether they have conflicting roles		
You may need to encourage your staff to make you aware of any issues in this area.		
Stressor	Yes/No	Comment/Action (describe actions to be taken)
Do your staff indicate that they understand their role and responsibilities;		
Do you ensure that, as far as possible, the different requirements placed upon your staff are compatible;		
Have your staff been provided with information to them to understand their role and responsibilities;		
Do you ensure that, as far as possible, the requirements placed upon your staff are clear;		
Are your staff aware of the procedure to follow to raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts they have in their role and responsibilities.		

Support		
Whether people are equipped with the necessary skills, information, and support to carry out their jobs effectively:		
This requires managers to ensure that staff are equipped with the necessary skills and information to carry out their jobs effectively. Personal development plans could be one method of approach.		
	Yes/No	Comment/Action (describe actions to be taken)
Do your staff indicate that they receive adequate information and support		
Do you encourage your staff to support their colleagues;		
Do your staff know what support is available and how and when to access it;		
Do your staff know how to access the required resources to do their job;		
Do your staff receive regular and constructive feedback from you and other people for whom they carry out work		

Guidance Notes

This risk assessment is intended to help those with responsibility for staff to assess whether or not current working conditions are likely to lead to significant stressors on employees within their area.

Note: This document is not intended to risk assess the stress of an individual. Where an individual is felt, or reports to be at risk from increased stress, the manager must refer to the **Individual Stress Action Plan**.

Information on how to complete this form can be found within Guidance and Information Sheet No. 9 – “Assessment of Stress at Work”.

Prior to completing this form, suitable training and advice on risk assessment and stress needs to have been undertaken. This training and advice can be provided by Corporate Safety Advice.

Criteria for use

The Team Stress Risk assessment must be used when;

The Manager responsible has been made aware of, or feels that there may be issues with regard to stress impacting upon the performance of the team. Indications of this may be;

- Increased levels of sickness absence
- Concerns regarding diminishing performance
- Increased interpersonal conflict
- Unusually high number of grievances
- High turnover of staff
- Concerns raised by a trade union health & safety representative

The team is about to, or has experienced significant changes to the structure of their work. This may be in relation to;

- A restructure of the team / department / Organisation
- Changes to roles within the team
- Increased demands placed upon the team
- A change of working environment

Completing the 'Team Stress Risk Assessment' Form

1. The term 'manager' refers to persons with responsibility for staff.
2. Please complete **Section 2: Arrangements**, answering both questions. If the answers are negative then you **must** identify actions to establish such arrangements.
3. Then complete **Section 3: Performance** on each Stressor answering Yes or No to each of the questions in the table.
4. If you answer No to any of the primary questions in bold in each section, then you **must** identify actions that are necessary. The other questions in each section should help identify appropriate actions.
5. If you answer No to any of the other questions, then you **must** either indicate actions to be taken or at least comment on why the current situation is acceptable.
6. Then complete **Section 1: Summary** at the front of the assessment, including your estimate of the risk to your staff from stressors on the following basis:
 - **Low Risk** If your response to each primary question was **Yes**. Current methods for controlling risk to health are adequate. Unlikely to cause harm to members of staff.
 - **Medium Risk** If you responded **No** to a primary question especially if your answers to other questions was also **No**. Current methods for controlling risk to health are not fully adequate and must be improved within an agreed time period. Some risk to members of staff is possible.
 - **High Risk** If your responses to more than one primary question was No. Current methods are inadequate for controlling the risk to health and improvements must be made as quickly as possible. Significant risk to members of staff is possible.
7. Share the results of the assessment with your staff, highlighting the arrangements that are in place and offering them the opportunity to provide you with feedback either direct to you or through a confidential channel such as a Trade Union or work colleague.
8. **Make sure you follow up on any identified actions.**