**Team Wellbeing and Stress Risk Assessment**

***Guidance for completing the assessment***

**About this guidance and template**

This guidance is designed to help managers complete a wellbeing and stress risk assessment for a group of people. The assessment can cover large or small groups of staff within a Faculty, School or Directorate.

We can all feel stressed at times, often this is the result of factors in both our personal and working lives. The process outlined in this guidance will help you identify work factors (sometimes called psychosocial factors) that have the potential to or are causing stress among team members. This might be because of a recent change in team structure or roles, a change in workload or staff turnover. You can also use this form ahead of an upcoming change that will impact your team or area.

As well as engaging the individuals involved in the stress risk assessment, you might find it valuable to engage the views of other third parties, such as People Partners, occupational health, health and safety advisers and union reps. You should also use available data sources to complete the stress risk assessment.

*FYI - There is a separate* [*template*](https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=75733) *for completing a work-related stress risk assessment for an individual.*

**About work-related stress**

The University has a duty of care to protect its employees from work-related stress. The HSE defines work-related stress as *‘the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them.’*

Work-related stress can occur when pressure exceeds a person’s capacity to cope. The stage at which excessive pressure leads to work-related stress will vary between individuals. Where stress is prolonged, it can lead to both physical and psychological damage including anxiety and depression.

Work-related stress can also aggravate an existing mental health problem, making it harder to control.

**Definitions**

**Psychosocial -** relates to the combined influence that psychological factors and the surrounding social environment have on a person's physical and mental wellbeing and their ability to function.

**Psychosocial hazards** – are aspects of work and workplace conditions (including working relationships with managers and colleagues) that may affect staff’s physical and mental health and wellbeing. Psychosocial hazards include high workloads, tight deadlines, long hours, job insecurity, lack of control over work, not being able to have a say in decisions that impact on their work, conflicts with co-workers or line managers, bullying and harassment and the design of work leading to limited opportunities for interaction with colleagues. The Management standards, referred to below, summarise six different areas of psychosocial hazards. The assessment helps you to identify what psychosocial hazards might be present in your team’s work environment

**Psychosocial Risk** - The risk is the likelihood or probability that a person will be harmed or experience negative physical or mental health effects from being exposed to a psychosocial hazard. In the wellbeing and stress risk assessment we ask you to assess the risk for each of the six Management Standards (see below) areas.

**Control Measures** - Actions and approaches taken to help manage risks (example control measures can be found in Appendix 1)

**The Management Standards**

The HSE Management Standards look at the six key areas of work that, if properly managed, can help reduce work-related stress. If these psychosocial hazards are well managed this should result in the following experience of the work environment. Further details of the management standards can be found in Appendix 1.

**How to complete a Team Wellbeing and Stress Risk Assessment**

There are four stages to go through to complete the risk assessment, but there are some logistical considerations before you move through these stages:

* Being clear about why you are completing the risk assessment:
  + *Proactively* – as part of looking ahead for the year and identifying factors that might impact on levels of work-related stress and wellbeing, including any planned change. In addition to help the team reflect on what is working well and to ensure these mechanisms are continued.
  + *Reactively* – in response to a set of circumstances that has the potential or already is impacting on team wellbeing. E.g. staffing levels, high levels of absence, relationships difficulties within the team, lack of clarity on roles in the teams, staff raising concern of feeling stressed due to work related activities.
* Identifying who will complete the risk assessment – in most circumstances, the leader of the team(s) will complete the risk assessment. However, if it has been identified that there is a difficulty between the leader and members of the team, it is helpful to identify an alternative person to complete the assessment. This would typically be someone who has an understanding of the team’s area of work and of a similar grade. The People Partner, in liaison with appropriate leader/manager for the area, for the area may be able to assist with identifying a suitable person to complete the assessment.
* Considering the time scale over which the assessment will be completed – there might be an urgency to complete the assessment quickly, to address a current situation, equally if you are doing this proactively you may have more time to undertake the assessment. You should consider that, when engaging members of the team, you may need to do this over more than one session to ensure sufficient time for discussion.
* Ensuring team members have time for reflection ahead of any group or individual discussions, by sending them a copy of the questions in the team wellbeing and stress risk assessment.

There four stages to completing a team work-related stress risk assessment are as follows:

**Stage 1 – Identify the enablers of wellbeing and challenges**

*This stage relates to pages 2-6 of the Wellbeing and Stress Risk Assessment tool*

Use the HSE Management Standards (Appendix 1) to assist with the process of assessing the current work environment and pressures, thinking about the specific work concerns of the team or, if going through a change, any anticipated impact on the team.

To understand the work environment in your team, gather information and data on your area/team. The following can provide insights into this:

* discussing the six areas of the management standards with the group of people involved, either during 1-2-1s or in team meetings.
* exit interview insights (where available) & insights from team level absence data employee absence data (specific data should not be recorded on this form to ensure confidentiality of sickness records)
* colleague survey and lifecycle survey insights for your area

Use the tool to capture the insights you have gathered from conversations and data. For each management standard also assess the level of risk in terms of whether it is likely to have a high, medium or low risk of contributing to work-related stress and poor wellbeing.

**Stage 2 – Identify the impact of any challenges**

*This stage relates to the first two columns of page 7 (‘positives to work from’ and ‘current challenges’)*

Having completed a review of the six areas, the individual conducting the assessment should summarise the positives and good practice they have identified for each of the six areas, as well as providing an overview of any challenges for each area. For example, one colleague absent for an extended period can have an impact on the workload and morale of the rest of the team, but there may already be control measures in place which are reducing the impact on the team such as prioritising tasks.

**Stage 3 - Identify what is already in place and additional actions required**

*This stage relates to the final four columns of page 7 and the table on page 8*

For this stage, summarise what you are already doing to manage any challenges and risks in this area, for example flexible working, regular team meetings, reviewing workload each week. These are sometimes referred to as the control measures.

Then identify any additional control measures required to best manage the issues identified through the risk assessment, e.g. re-defining roles, additional training or clarifying processes (refer to Appendix 1 for additional action ideas for each of the six areas). It can be helpful to discuss the risk assessment and action plan with the individuals involved, as they may be able to offer insights and suggestions for additional controls or the actions required.

Indicate who will carry out the additional actions and by when. If you have a number of actions to complete, review the plan and prioritise the areas identified as higher risk - focusing on these will have the greatest impact. There is space on page 8 for prioritising actions. You should also indicate on page 8 if there are factors that are contributing to poor wellbeing and work-related stress in the team, which you don’t feel you are able to influence. Where this is the case, these should be raised to more senior leaders.

**Stage 4 - Implement and regularly review the action plan**

We recommend that you review the team wellbeing and risk assessment every 6 months if there are no significant risk areas. However, if you have medium or high risks, you will need to review more regularly or if new insights or data indicate a review if needed, e.g.

• increasing numbers of staff experiencing work-related stress

• increasing staff absence

• staff survey results indicating concern or an area requiring investigation

• when the team will experience, or has experienced, significant change.

*Please indicate the first review date on page 8 of the tool.*

**Appendix 1 – The Management Standards and example actions that can be taken to address areas of challenge**

**Area 1 - Demands**

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| **How colleagues should feel at work** | * Able to cope with the demands of their job. * They are provided with achievable demands in relation to the hours they are contracted to work. * Their skills and abilities are matched to the demands of their job. * That concerns about their work environment are addressed. |
| **Action that can be taken to address** | * One-to-one meetings held where outcomes are agreed and recorded. * Guidance over prioritisation of tasks provided. * Match the skills and abilities of the team to the tasks set. * Staff training/coaching/supervision in place to ensure that staff are competent in their role. * Set achievable targets * Team meetings held regularly to review work demands * Review of workload allocation |

**Area 2 - Control**

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| **How colleagues should feel at work** | * They are consulted over the way their work is organised and undertaken, e.g. through regular meetings, one-to-ones, reviews. * They have regular opportunities for discussion and input at the start of projects or new pieces of work. * They are encouraged to use their skills and initiative to do their work. * They are consulted over things affecting their work. * They are encouraged to develop new skills and undertake new and challenging pieces of work. |
| **Action that can be taken to address** | * Appropriate communication mechanisms in place for both the individual and team. * Employees are encouraged to use their skills and initiative to do their work. * Flexible working patterns considered where possible and appropriate to the role. * Clarify individual workloads and review of work timescales agreed. * Where possible, employees are encouraged to develop new skills to help them undertake new and challenging pieces of work. * Where possible, employees have control over their pace of work and how they do their work. |

**Area 3 - Support**

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| **How colleagues should feel at work** | * They receive information and support from other employees and their managers. * There are systems in place to enable and encourage managers to support their employees and for employees to support one another. * They know what support is available and how to access it. * They know how to access the resources they need. * They receive regular and constructive feedback. |
| **Action that can be taken to address** | * Effective one-to-ones, group team meetings and staff review process in place. * Employees are reminded regularly what support is available and how to access it (Employee Assistance Programme, Occupational Health, DASS, Employee Relations team, Staff Network Groups, Staff Wellbeing Team, Report and Support etc). * Managers provide regular and constructive feedback. * Managers work to create a psychologically safe environment for colleagues, * Managers role modelling positive wellbeing behaviours and regularly check in with staff. * Encourage work colleagues to support one another. * Training and development for managers and individuals. |

**Area 4 - Relationships**

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| **How colleagues should feel at work** | * They are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours such as bullying or harassment at work. * The university promotes positive behaviours at work. * The university has agreed policies and procedures to prevent or resolve unacceptable behaviour. * The university has systems in place to enable and encourage managers to deal with unacceptable behaviour. * The university has systems in place to enable and encourage employees to report unacceptable behaviour. |
| **Action that can be taken to address** | * Adequate communication mechanisms in place, operating effectively (individual or team meetings). * Encourage regular updates of information within your team. * Equality and Diversity Training completed by all members of staff as part of their induction and reviewed as appropriate. * Opportunities for the team to celebrate success. * Encourage events in work time where employees can network/socialise, build relationships. * Zero tolerance on bullying and harassment, encourage report and support, treat all concerns seriously. * Where tensions are observed, try to resolve amicably and quickly. * Encourage colleagues to raise and report concerns. * Develop team charter about how you work together – this might relate to when you book meetings and focus time, how you implement the University values, how you ensure team cohesion on a day-to-day basis * Developing shared understanding of team members’ strengths and ways of working. * Use of Employee Relations team where mediation is required between team members; signposting to Employee Assistance Programme. |

**Area 5 - Role**

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| **How colleagues should feel at work** | * They understand their role and responsibilities. * The university provides information to enable them to understand their role and all of their responsibilities. * The requirements the organisation places on them are clear. * They are able to raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts they have in their role and responsibilities through the systems that the organisation has in place. |
| **Action that can be taken to address** | * Clear roles and responsibilities, encourage conversation between individuals, line manager to ensure all understand their duties. * Clear team structures are in place * Team members understand the scope of their role and how it contributes to the team’s purpose. * Ensure appropriate communication mechanisms are in place and operating effectively (individual one to ones, staff reviews and team meetings). * Induction process is established and used; new employees are encouraged to attend University induction events. * Mechanisms in place to update any job description when appointing a new member of staff to that role or when there are significant changes to the role. * Communicate team or area targets / objectives to help clarify individual and unit roles. * Ensure team members have a performance review each year. |

**Area 6 - Change**

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| **How colleagues should feel at work** | * The university engages with them frequently during change. * They are provided with timely information, enabling them to understand the reasons for proposed changes. * They are consulted on changes and provided with opportunities for them to influence proposals, raise concerns and identify any gaps. * They are aware of the probable impact of any changes to their job and, if necessary, they are given training to support any changes in their job. |
| **Action that can be taken to address** | * Adequate communication mechanisms are in place and operating effectively (individual one to ones, staff reviews and team meetings). * Ensure adequate employee consultation on changes (reasons, benefits and timescales) and staff provided with opportunities to influence and have their say on how the proposed change will work. * Ensure ample time for consultation/feedback. * During times of change, staff may feel overwhelmed so consider tasks that can be dropped to accommodate. * Employees reminded by their line managers how to access relevant support during change. * Trade Union representatives and staff representatives consulted on possible change. * Staff training as necessary to support the implementation of the change * Ensure change is monitored and reviewed frequently and address issues where the new ways of working are ineffective. * Pulse surveys to identify what is working well and what isn't working and using results to inform action. |