

Example of a key issues agenda for managing stress risks

HSE publication HSG218 ‘Managing the causes of work-related stress’ is accepted as good practice in managing the causes of work related stress. The approach is a step-by-step approach using the Management Standards and the key issues below reflect the steps given in HSG 218 (in italics in the framework) and if followed allow an assessment to be made of how stress is managed as a risk control system within the RM3 framework.

RM3 Criteria	Key issues to explore during assessment
Leadership - SP1	<p><i>Prepare</i> - Are senior management committed to the process for managing stress within the organisation? For example is there evidence of senior managers;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visibly demonstrating support and participating in communication activities - Allocating sufficient resources - Delegating authority to relevant groups e.g. steering group - attending steering group meetings
Safety Policy - SP2	<p><i>Prepare</i> - Is there a commitment within the safety policy to managing stress. Excellent organisations will have a specific stress management policy (<i>appendix 1</i>)</p>
Board Governance - SP3	<p><i>Prepare</i> - Has management commitment been achieved e.g. by making the ethical and legal case at board level</p>
Written Safety Management System - SP4	<p><i>Prepare</i> - Occupational health issues including stress should be explicit in the written HSMS.</p>
Allocation of responsibilities - OC1	<p><i>Prepare</i> - Is there a stress steering group with defined objectives, key roles assigned appropriately and adequate resources.</p>

Management and supervisory accountability - OC2	Are staff with responsibilities for managing stress held accountable (<i>step 3</i>)?
Communication arrangements - OC4	<i>Prepare</i> - Has a communications/employee engagement strategy been developed? Are the results of stress risk assessments communicated (<i>Step 3</i>)?
Culture management - OC6	Have possible solutions involving support been identified and implemented (<i>step 3</i>)? Have individual concerns been dealt with (<i>step 5</i>)?
Record keeping - OC7	Have the findings been recorded (<i>step 4</i>)? Has progress against action plans been recorded (<i>step 5</i>)?
Worker involvement and internal cooperation - OP1	<i>Prepare</i> Has commitment from employees and their representatives been secured. See pg 21 'How to secure commitment from employees and their representatives'. Have employees been consulted to explore problems and confirm of challenge on initial findings (<i>step 3</i>)?
Competence management system - OP2	Have possible solutions involving competency been identified and implemented (<i>step 3</i>)? See Appendix 4 – competency framework for managers
Risk assessment and management - P11	Has an appropriate stress risk assessment been carried out including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - gathering appropriate data (consider, quality and range of data gathered, use of surveys/stress analysis tools) - Preliminary analysis and - Risk evaluation (<i>step 2</i>) Have appropriate means been used to link problems to solutions e.g. focus groups (<i>step 3</i>)?
Objective/Target Setting - P12	Have action plans been developed (<i>part 4</i>)?
Workload planning - P13	Has the workload of the steering group and individual members been planned (<i>prepare</i> - see secure adequate resource on pg 23). Have possible solutions involving workload and working patterns been identified and implemented (<i>step 3</i>)?

Safe systems of work including safety critical work - RCS1	Have solutions involving physical environment and violence prevention been identified and implemented <i>step 3</i> ?
Change management (process, engineering, organisational) - RCS3	Have possible solutions involving change been identified and implemented (<i>step 3</i>)?
Proactive monitoring arrangements - MRA1	Are action plans monitored and reviewed? (<i>Step 5</i>)
Incident investigation and management - MRA3	Have data e.g. sickness absence, staff turnover been gathered (<i>step 2</i>)? Are investigations into individual cases carried out?
Review at appropriate levels - MRA4	Has an initial status review comparing the organisation's performance with the 'good management practice' of the management standards been carried out (<i>step 1</i>)?. Has status been reviewed after the implementation of action plans (<i>step 5</i>)? <i>See also appendix 2 – HSE management standards indicator tool</i>