



OFFICE OF RAIL REGULATION

Stress risk assessment workshop

Sharon Mawhood ORR

ORR TU Safety Reps Conference 6 November 2013

Session overview

- Short introduction
 - Rail industry context
 - What does good stress management look like?
- Structured discussion to explore stress risk assessment
 - How do you know you've got a problem?
 - How do you translate problems into solutions?
 - Practical ideas for change?

Stress.....a problem within rail industry?

- **Stress almost endemic**....with 24/7 demands and labour market changes, challenge across all industry sectors
- **Rail workers** - TUC 2012 biennial survey – 69% reps stress main hazard in transport sector; ASLEF responses – 77% respondents ranked stress top
- **Rail industry** – RSSB 2005 research stress ranked 2nd; 2013 Workforce Health and Wellbeing Project good practice guidance on better health risk assessment, including stress
- **Individual rail duty holders** – more comprehensive mental wellbeing strategies, pockets of excellence
- **ORR** - recognition in health programme



What does good stress management look like?

Hierarchy of control for stress

➤ **Primary - prevention**

- preventing harmful levels stress developing
- ***work centred*** - focus on the work and way it is done

➤ **Secondary - coping skills**

- building coping skills – resilience training, employee assistance, buddying
- focus on the individual

➤ **Tertiary - support for affected**

- support after the event – rehabilitation, staged return to work, counselling and employee support services
- focus on the individual

Where is the rail industry...?

- ▶ Pockets of good practice.....ORR web site good practice [case studies](#)
 - ▶ Arriva Trains Wales – NICE guidelines on post traumatic stress management = **tertiary** intervention
 - ▶ Transport for London – Stress Reduction Groups to build personal resilience = **secondary** intervention
- ▶ Need more effort and focus on prevention by looking at way work done = **primary** intervention
- ▶ Shift towards organisational approach as well as individual
- ▶ [HSE Management Standards](#) approach well tested framework

HSE Management standards approach



Exploring stress risk assessment

Common sense but common practice?

- Apply well tested 5 steps to risk assessment approach to work related stress
- Recognise that cannot eliminate stress and can be complex
- Works best where employees and managers work together, with open and honest communication
- Health and safety reps ideally placed to explain and encourage workforce participation
- Key role in devising solutions and communicating agreed actions

Step 1- Management Standards approach identifies 6 stress risk factors or stress hazards

- **Demands:** workload, work patterns, work environment
- **Control:** How much say the person has in the way they do their work
- **Support:** encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues
- **Relationships:** promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour
- **Role:** Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles
- **Change:** How organisational change is managed and communicated in the organisation.

Step 2 – Decide who might be harmed and how

- Finding out where there might be a problem
- Look for indicators or early warning signs of stress, in order to identify potential stress hot spots
- Look across the organisation (at job roles, locations, departments) rather than individuals
- Use a range of data, not just sickness absence (more likely to pick up presenteeism)
- Each table take 5 minutes to brainstorm and list on flipchart:
- **What information sources *could* be used to identify stress hot spots or potential problems?**
- 5 minutes to share feedback

Use of data to identify high risk job roles or locations

- **Anonymised information at group level**
- Sickness absence data
- Return to work and exit interviews
- Employee engagement/staff and TU surveys
- Stress risk assessment questionnaire
- Body mapping/risk mapping
- Referrals to OHP and use Employee Assistance
- TUC stress MOT
- Staff turnover and grievances
- Unused annual leave and excessive working hours?
- Staff appraisals – deteriorating performance?

Collecting information to identify stress hot spots

Additional ideas from safety reps' discussion groups

- ▶ Performance indicators (delays/PPM, customer service, production deadlines)
- ▶ Incident reports (BTP & control logs, accident/incident summaries by department/location)
- ▶ Rosters and fatigue index records (workload peaks)
- ▶ Trade union legal teams
- ▶ Open door 'surgeries'
- ▶ Informal, via mess room and noticeboards
- ▶ One to one chats
- ▶ Overtime worked (or refused)
- ▶ Sharing information across companies (between TOCs for example)
- ▶ Question and answer session on stress problems



Step 3 Translating problems into solutions – what works?

- Use 6 stress risk factors to explore underlying causes
- Focus groups - directed discussion with managers and workers
- Staff suggestion box/scheme – anonymous or reward/incentive?
- Better use return to work and exit interviews – structure around ‘why’?
- Discuss findings at JSC or H & S committees
- **Develop action plans – use 6 stress risk factors to explore opportunities to change**
- Get commitment to act now – even if small
- _{1,2} Prioritise and be realistic - focus on quick wins first

Achieving change in practice

What *enables* good stress management?

- A Good work-life balance
- B Leadership – senior and middle managers
- C Good physical work environment
- D No-blame culture/trust
- E Some control and flexibility over work
- F Recognition/praise
- G Open communication and willingness to listen
- H Positive promotion of psychological wellbeing – lack of stigma
- I Well trained managers with people skills
- J Time and resources recognised and delivered

Practical changes to enable better management of work related stress ?

- What practical changes might be included in an action plan?
- **Each table to take 5 minutes to identify some basic practical changes, using key enablers as guide, and record on flipchart**
- For example...
 - **A. Work life balance** – managers encourage staff to take breaks and holidays entitled to, and *lead by example*
 - **E. Control and flexibility over work** - *actively encourage* use of telecons rather travel
- **5 minutes to share group findings**

Some examples of practical steps...?

- Reduce need early morning/late evening meetings affecting staff with family/caring responsibilities (A, E)
- Time set aside to prioritise workloads – forward look for peak workloads (E,G)
- Encourage face-to-face/phone communication rather all email (D, E, G)
- Promote sociable working environment – opportunities to get together? (C, F)
- Regular team meetings – involve staff in decision making - regular on-going support for remote workers (E, G, J)
- Clean, light working environment including welfare facilities (C)
- Managers to be available (at agreed times) for staff (B, E, F, G)
- Line managers required to review their own behaviours using [online stress management competency tool](#) (D, G, I)

Delivering better stress management Ideas from TU reps' discussion groups

- **A. Work life balance** – better planning; work smarter (technology); quiet rooms (stress from open plan); stick to contracted hours and better rostering practice
- **B. Leadership** – more visible senior managers; middle managers need education and training, and to lead by example; humane and transparent management
- **C. Work environment** – clean, tidy, well lit rest and welfare facilities; use cab environment working groups; more workplace inspections
- **D. No blame culture** – anonymous suggestion scheme with feedback to workforce; joint training for reps and managers; team bonding (e.g. annual BBQs?); zero tolerance on bullying/victimisation



Delivering better stress management Ideas from TU reps' discussion groups

- **E. Control** – family friendly hours; management and colleagues to be aware of pressures/demands on others
- **F. Recognition** – pat on the back; promotion and advancement; letter of thanks; 'extra mile' awards; CIRAS recognition; needs to work both ways (managers and workforce)
- **G. Open communication** – better access to managers (open door policy; one to one meetings); avoid 'tunnel vision'; joint training of managers and workforce on mental wellbeing/stress; open communication on change (e.g. roster changes)

Delivering better stress management Ideas from TU reps' discussion groups

- **H. Positive promotion of mental wellbeing** – safety reps need to build confidence in mental health issue – TUC learner reps to help?; promote benefits and discuss openly at JSC
- **I. Management skills**- more coaching among managers to build people skills; challenge resource cuts to give managers time to manage
- **J. Time and resources** – better planning to make best use resources; can more people be a hindrance?

What now....?

- Capture your views from discussion groups and cascade
- Report in [ORR's quarterly health update](#) and on [ORR web site](#)
- Encourage to take back to workplace for discussion at JSC or H & S committees?
- Ask about stress risk assessment
- Ask to be actively involved in process - identifying high risk areas and in devising practical solutions