**Stress Risk Assessment**

## Notes to staff

* You may find it helpful to complete a stress risk assessment if you have any concerns about work-related pressures or if you feel that you are suffering from work-related stress.
* If you complete the form, you’re not obliged to share its contents with anyone – however, completing it with your manager or sharing all or part of it with your manager, may help you to discuss potential sources of stress and identify ways to address areas of concern.
* If you don’t feel able to talk directly to your manager about a work-related concern, you can speak with another manager, a colleague, a member of the HR team, the Health & Safety team or a trade union representative for advice or to raise the issue or your behalf. Other sources of advice and support are included within this form.
* You don’t have to answer every question - only answer those questions that are relevant and that you find **helpful**.

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**The University’s Stress Management Policy and a wealth of internal and external resources can be found at:** <https://staff.napier.ac.uk/services/governance-compliance/healthandsafety/guidance/Pages/Stress.aspx>

## Notes to managers

* A stress risk assessment should be completed in the following situations:
  + Where evidence or data suggests that there may be issues or pressures which have the potential to become **future causes** of work related-stress if they are not managed properly.
  + Where you believe that an employee or team may be suffering from **work-related stress** or they disclose concerns to you.
  + When a member of staff is **absent** due to sickness and their absence may be caused or exacerbated by factors in the workplace.
* To plan for major **change**.
* There is no strict format for how you should complete the assessment, you can use it to structure a conversation with an employee or a team or can issue the questions as a survey and collate the responses – use your judgement about what approach will work best for you and your staff.
* You should make time for these conversations and encourage open and honest dialogue. Together, you should agree appropriate actions to mitigate any identified sources of stress and address any areas of concern. Progress should be reviewed on a regular basis.
* The **appendix** includes suggestions for preventing stress in each of the areas that could be causing stress at work.
* Please send a copy of the stress risk assessment to the HR team.

**Job Demands**

| Employees should feel   * They are able to cope with the demands of their job. * They are provided with achievable demands in relation to the hours they work. * Their skills and abilities are matched to the demands of their job. * Concerns about their work environment are addressed. | | |
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| **Consider the following questions** | **Any issues identified** | **Improvements or support that could be put in place to help address, or help the employee cope with, the issues that have been identified. By when?** |
| **Does your workload feel achievable?**   * Think about which tasks take up most of your time and how your school/service copes at busy times. * Do you have to work intensively most of the time? * Is your workload achievable in relation to the hours you work? |  |  |
| **Do you feel the deadlines you are given are realistic?**   * Do you often have conflicting deadlines? |  |  |
| **Have you had the right amount of training to carry out the core functions of your role?**   * Do you have any specific training needs to enable you to undertake your role effectively? |  |  |
| **Do you have any concerns with your work environment (physical and psychological)?**   * Think about any physical hazards, noise, temperature, ventilation etc. * Is there a threat of violence or evidence of bullying, harassment or other poor practices? |  |  |

**Control**

| Employees should feel   * They are consulted over the way their work is organised and undertaken, e.g. through regular meetings, 1:1’s, performance 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 and they are encourage to develop new skills and undertake new and challenging pieces of work. | | |
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| **Consider the following questions** | **Any issues identified** | **Improvements or support that could be put in place to help address, or help the employee cope with, the issues that have been identified. By when?** |
| **Do you feel involved in how decisions about your job are made?**   * Think about whether you feel listened to and trusted, how you are consulted and are there opportunities for input. |  |  |
| **Do you feel your skills are used to good effect?**   * Could your existing skills be used more effectively? |  |  |
| **Do you feel you have control in how your work is undertaken?**   * Think about how your plan, structure and organise your day. |  |  |
| **Are you able to decide when to take sufficient breaks?** |  |  |

**Support**

| Employees should feel   * They receive information and support from colleagues and their manager. * The University has 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 and how to access the resources that they need. * They receive regular and constructive feedback. | | |
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| **Consider the following questions** | **Any issues identified** | **Improvements or support that could be put in place to help address, or help the employee cope with, the issues that have been identified. By when?** |
| **Do you feel that the University is a positive place to work and that you are valued?**   * Think about the working environment, the support available and the opportunities to talk about the support you may need. |  |  |
| **Do you know who to talk to and where to go when you need support?**   * Think about where you would go for help if you were experiencing an issue and whether you would feel comfortable doing so. |  |  |
| **Do you have enough opportunities to discuss any emerging issues or pressures?** |  |  |
| **If appropriate, have you had sufficient support following the conclusion of a suspension, disciplinary or grievance process?**   * If recommendations were made, have these been taken forward? |  |  |

**Relationships**

| Employees should feel   * They are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours such as bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation 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 people to report unacceptable behaviour. * The University has systems in place to enable and encourage managers to deal with unacceptable behaviour. | | |
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| **Consider the following questions** | **Any issues identified** | **Improvements or support that could be put in place to help address, or help the employee cope with, the issues that have been identified. By when?** |
| **Are you experiencing any poor relationships or difficult interactions with others at work?** |  |  |
| **Have you experienced or witnessed unacceptable behaviour at work?**   * Think about if you are satisfied that it has been dealt with? |  |  |
| **Do you feel that honest, open communication is encouraged in your school/service?** |  |  |
| **Do you know where to go and what to do if you experience or witness unacceptable behaviour?**   * Do you feel confident that steps will be taken to stop this behaviour? |  |  |

**Role**

| Employees should feel   * They understand their role and responsibilities. * Information is available to enable them to understand their role and all of their responsibilities. * The requirements of the role are clear. * They are able to raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts they have in their role and responsibilities. | | |
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| **Consider the following questions** | **Any issues identified** | **Improvements or support that could be put in place to help address, or help the employee cope with, the issues that have been identified. By when?** |
| **Are you clear what you are responsible for?**   * Is there any confusion about who is accountable / responsible for any areas of work? |  |  |
| **Are you clear on what your performance objectives are and what success looks like for you, your school/service and for the University?**   * Do you feel that these are achievable? |  |  |
| **Do you understand how work is structured in your school/service?**   * Do you know who is doing what and why and how your role fits in? |  |  |

**Change**

| Employees should feel   * The University engages with them frequently when undergoing change. * They are provided with timely information, enabling them to understand the reasons for the proposed changes. * They are consulted on changes and provided with opportunities for them to influence proposals. * They are aware of the potential impact of any changes to their role and, if necessary, are given training to support any changes to their role. | | |
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| **Consider the following questions** | **Any issues identified** | **Improvements or support that could be put in place to help address, or help the employee cope with, the issues that have been identified. By when?** |
| **Do you feel that change is handled well?** |  |  |
| **Do you feel uncertain or concerned about the future?** |  |  |
| **Are you properly consulted when changes are made which affect you/your role?**   * Are the reasons for change explained well? * Think about if you have had the opportunity to discuss career aspirations, concerns about any changes to your role. |  |  |
| **Are you involved in the planning process when changes are made?** |  |  |

**Personal Factors**

| Support is available for employees if they are experiencing ill health or personal challenges. | | |
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| **Consider the following question** | **Any issues identified** | **Improvements or support that could be put in place to help address, or help the employee cope with, the issues that have been identified. By when?** |
| **Are you experiencing any personal challenges or difficulties that you wish to share? Examples could include:**   * Mental or physical ill health * Bereavement * Traumatic event * Caring for an ill relative/dependent * Financial problems * Relationship problems * Addiction |  |  |

**Anything else?**

| **Consider the following question** | **Any issues identified** | **Improvements or support that could be put in place to help address, or help the employee cope with, the issues that have been identified. By when?** |
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| **Are there any other issues or concerns that have not been discussed?** |  |  |

**Assessment carried out by:**

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| **Employee Name:** | **Job Title:** | **Date:** | **Review Date:** |
| **Manager Name:** | **Job Title:** | **Date:** | **Review Date:** |

**Appendix – Suggestions for Managers to Prevent Work-Related Stress**

When considering possible solutions for addressing the issue or helping the employee to cope with the issue, consider any current control measures that are already in place and happening now.

**Job Demands**

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| **Workload** | * Look at job design and working practices * Review workload/demands regularly and reprioritise work as required * Remove any unnecessary work and communication * Support staff to plan and prioritise their work effectively * Allow sufficient time for proper collaborating planning * Ensure employees are planning in their annual leave throughout the year |
| **Working Patterns** | * Ensure employees are taking regular breaks, especially when the work is complex or emotionally demanding * Review working patterns/shifts * Consider requests to change working hours to help employees cope with pressures outside work, e.g. childcare or commuting (**Flexible Working Policy**) * Consider if there are alternative ways to complete work, e.g. enhancing the scope/variety/responsibility of roles and rotating repetitive tasks wherever possible * Consider varying conditions such as occasional homeworking where appropriate for the role/service etc. |
| **Deadlines** | * Notify employees in advance of unplanned tight deadlines * Hold regular meetings, both on a 1:1 and team basis, to discuss anticipated future workload and to deal with any predicted busy times |
| **Training** | * Assess skills and training needs (**My Development**) * Have a career planning conversation (**My Career**) * Put in place appropriate training to ensure any skill/knowledge gaps required to undertake the role are addressed |
| **Work Environment** | * Assess the risk and impact of potential physical hazards, e.g. noise, temperature and ventilation and take appropriate steps to control * Support employees deal with and defuse difficult situations * Take appropriate steps to deal with any violence, verbal abuse or unacceptable behaviour (**Dignity at Work Policy**) and escalate as appropriate |

**Control**

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| **Decisions** | * Talk about the way decisions are made and encourage people to participate in decision making * Hold regular discussions with employees during the planning stage of new pieces of work, projects etc. to talk about anticipated methods of working |
| **Skills** | * Talk about the skills people have and establish if they believe they are able to use these to good effect * Ask people how they would like to use their skills and consider what skills they would like to develop (**My Contribution**) |
| **Role** | * Help employees have a say over the work their work is organised and undertaken through project meetings, 1:1’s and performance reviews * Promote a collaborative approach, agree priorities and allow employees to influence the way that work is carried out * Recognise and celebrate success |
| **Work-Life Balance** | * Encourage a healthy work-life balance * Encourage employees to take sufficient breaks and establish the reasons if sufficient breaks are not being taken * Encourage staff to have ‘downtime’ where they do not read, write or review emails outside normal working hours, unless in exceptional circumstances * Consider requests to change to working hours to help employees cope with pressures outside work, like childcare or commuting (**Flexible Working Policy**) |

**Support**

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| **Support** | * Hold regular 1:1 and team meetings to talk about any emerging issues or pressures * Consider buddying systems or work shadowing to improve understanding of roles across the team * Seek examples of how people would like, or have received, good support from managers or colleagues * Consistent application of HR policies such as **Attendance Management**, **Performance Improvement Policy** etc. * Ensure new employees and those who are promoted, transferring or returning from a period of leave are properly inducted * Where it is appropriate to facilitate a reasonable adjustment due to a person’s disability ensure it is put in place and regularly reviewed * Ensure any recommendations arising from the outcome of a disciplinary or grievance process are followed through |
| **Resources** | * Share information with employees about the areas of internal/external support that is available, such as:   - HR support and a referral to **Occupational Health** as appropriate  - Employee Counselling and Wellbeing Service - **Workplace Options**  - Mental Health & Wellbeing Awareness training  - **Stress Management** resources  - **University Inclusion Networks**  **- Big White Wall** |
| **Training** | * Regularly check that training is up-to-date * Support employees to help them deal with and defuse difficult situations |

**Relationships**

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| **Support** | * Lead by example and ensure that you and your team members are familiar with the **Dignity at Work Policy** to understand the behaviours that the University considers to be unacceptable and what to do if such behaviour is experienced or witnessed * Promote a positive environment with a culture of open, honest and constructive communication * Encourage employees to attend training that will enhance their ability to interact with others, such as influencing and communication skills * Encourage and provide opportunities for employees to socialise together * Find ways to acknowledge and celebrate success |

**Role**

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| **New starters** | * Ensure that you complete all of the required elements of the **University’s Induction Programme** for any new people joining your team |
| **Communication** | * Agree clear performance objectives with your team members at the start of each performance year (**My Contribution**) * Define work structures clearly so that all team members know who is responsible for what, and why * Hold regular 1:1’s to review progress, ensuring appropriate support/resources are in place to enable the achievement of objectives * Display departmental/school aims and objectives * If appropriate, work with employees to update their role profiles to ensure core functions and priorities are clear * Discuss training and development regularly |

**Change**

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| **Consultation** | * Involve employees in the planning process wherever possible * Define and explain key steps of any changes that are being made – knowing exactly what is going to happen can help people feel less anxious about a change * Consult employees early and throughout any change process – uncertainty can lead to increased anxiety, unfounded gossip and a poor working environment * Agree a system for enabling employees to provide feedback and ask questions during a period of consultation * Provide effective support for all affected staff throughout the change process * Consider how a change may impact on team and individual workloads and performance objectives * Consider training needs – do people have the tools and skills to effect change? * Ensure that you and your team members are familiar with the **Organisational Change Policy** as appropriate |
| **Communication** | * Start communication early and ensure there is two-way communication throughout the process * Getting together as a team can help people feel less isolated with their concerns * Explain why the change is necessary, timescales and how the changes will directly impact people * Have agreed methods of communication (don’t rely on a single communication route) and their frequency so people know when to expect an update * Don’t under estimate the effects of ‘minor’ changes, seemingly small changes can have a big impact on people’s ways of working, their morale and level of work-related stress. |

**Personal Factors**

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| **Sources of Support** | * HR team and Trade Union representatives * Employee Counselling and Wellbeing Service - **Workplace Options** * Referral to **Occupational Health** * Consideration of reasonable adjustments * **University Inclusion Networks** * Mental Health & Wellbeing Awareness training * **Stress Management** resources * Relevant HR Policies such as **Flexible Working, Family Leave, Dignity at Work, Attendance Management** etc. |