



Work Related Stress
Joint Guidance for Colleges
From the Association of Colleges
and
Trade Unions of the National Joint Forum



Contents

Introduction and Executive Summary	1
Authors	2
Note	3
Statement of Principles	4
Suggested Model Policy Statement: Emotional and Psychological Well-being at Work	6
Aims	8
Responsibilities	9
Annex 1 Information: Legal Background	10
Notes to Annex 1	12
Annex 2(a) Workplace Causes of Stress	15
Notes to Annex 2(a)	17
Annex 2(b) Effects and Symptoms of Stress	18
Notes to Annex 2(b)	20
Annex 3(a) Guidance and Procedures	21
Notes to Annex 3(a)	24
Annex 3(b) Risk Assessment Model	25
Appendix I: Definitions used in this Policy and Associated Procedures	28
Notes to Appendix I	30
Appendix II: Workplace Interventions/Control Measures	31
Appendix III: Example: Well-Person Questionnaire	33
Appendix IV: Resolving Stress In The Workplace – A Formal Tracking Protocol	38
Checklist Stress: Causes and Solutions	40
Appendix V Stress Management Checklist	41
Appendix VI: Positive Effects of Staff Counselling Provision	43
Appendix VII: Further Guidance	45
Appendix VIII Relevant Publications	46

Introduction and Executive Summary

This document has been developed to assist the Further Education sector in addressing the problem of work related Stress. It is the product of discussions and sharing of best practice involving the Association of Colleges, Joint Trade Unions of the National Joint Forum and Safety and Occupational Health specialists of FE colleges.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE), through its Higher and Further Education Advisory Committee (HIFEAC), has encouraged the process and has offered its support.

In recent years there has been increasing awareness about the causes of stress at work and the effects of stress on organisational effectiveness and on employee health. Stress is now one of the largest causes of occupational ill health causing the loss of tens of millions of working days each year. It is estimated that around 200,000 British people receive stress counselling each year; double the number of ten years ago.

It is not possible to provide a precise model policy for stress management which would be applicable to all colleges because of the different circumstances of individual employers. This document is an attempt to introduce a generic approach to the main principles and points which we recommend should be included in every policy.

The suggested model policy, which is included, acknowledges that stress exists in most college environments and emphasises the need for the effective management and control of stress. It is directed at the whole college workforce and particularly to those with Governor, Executive or Line Management responsibilities. The procedures provide practical guidance for management, reflect current best practice and comply with Health and Safety Executive (HSE) advice in this area.

Authors

This guidance has been produced by a working group comprising Safety and Occupational Health specialists from the Association of Colleges and its members and the Trade Unions of the National Joint Forum.

Stephen Green, Health & Safety Consultant of the Association of Colleges, wishes to thank the individuals who contributed, and their organisations.

Note

The HSE's **Revitalising Health and Safety: Strategy Statement** sets out their long-term goals for improvements in occupational health strategy – to be achieved by 2010. They include:

- A 20% reduction in the incidence of work related ill health
- A 30% reduction in the number of working days lost due to work related ill health
- Provisions for disabled or ill workers to return to employment
- Stress is also one of the priority action points for the Health and Safety Commission's Higher and Further Education Advisory Committee (HIFEAC) on which both the AoC and Joint Trade Unions are represented

Note

Statement of Principles

A good and workable stress management policy will:

- Have been created following consultations between managers, trade unions and employees
- Emphasise that stress is a Health and Safety issue and that it is the employer's responsibility to minimise risk
- Be based on current best knowledge and practice
- Apply to all staff
- Be acknowledged by the college Governors and Senior Managers as a demonstration of their responsibility and commitment to minimising risk
- Clearly state the organisation's preferred definition of stress, demand, hazard and risk
- Create a climate of openness to encourage the reporting of potential stressful incidents
- Refer to other related policies and procedures
- Clearly state the steps which will be taken to minimise the harmful effects of stress. These should include:
 - stress survey
 - risk assessment
 - provision of control measures
- Provide clear procedures for reporting potential or actual incidents of stress
- Be monitored and reviewed regularly
- Acknowledge the cost of stress to organisations and individuals
- Be widely publicised and discussed throughout the college
- Be supported by appropriate staff training

The key characteristics that will enable a procedure of this nature to be successful are:

- Trust by staff that their employers will listen and respond in a fair way
- All staff are prepared to be constructive about themselves and open to personal change
- The college, as an employer, is committed to its policies; fair in the evaluation of circumstances and situations
- Liability should only be allocated when there is evidence of misconduct and a disregard for the safety of others, based on sound reliable evidence

Potential stress causing circumstances should not be obscured or disguised. An open approach is to be encouraged whereby staff feel comfortable to discuss any problem, in confidence if necessary, without any threat to themselves, with a manager who can listen, agree on, and have the authority to act on, an appropriate 'Course of Care', and/or implement a 'Safety Management Action', involving:

- Consultation with other staff
- Encouraging other staff to report their views and observations
- Risk assessing all circumstances to identify risks to employees' Health and Safety with regard to their mental well being at work
- Ensuring a blame free culture in all dialogue
- Ensuring equity of treatment
- Access to a college Staff Counselling Service

The purposes of the process are:

- To achieve stated college values
- To support college Health and Safety Policy
- To comply with legal duties
- To develop a pro-active approach aimed at eradicating unacceptable stress circumstances within the organisation

Suggested Model Policy Statement: Emotional and Psychological Well-being at Work

Statement of Intent

This policy has been produced in consultation with college Governors and Management, Trade Unions and Employees.

The college recognises the statutory requirements and responsibilities of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999 and other relevant legislation, Regulations, Guidance and Codes of Practice. The policy forms part of the college organisational arrangements, particularly relating to Health and Safety and employment.

This policy forms part of the college's general Health and Safety policy arrangements as well as being an essential element of the good health promotion practices at work that encourage positive action on smoking, alcohol and drugs, nutrition, physical activity and stress.

It is recognised that work related stress is a Health and Safety issue and that risks to health can be minimised by the implementation of good management procedures. The college believes it to be unethical that employees should be injured by their work and that reasonable arrangements must be in place to prevent accidents and ill health occurring. The policy informs everyone in the college of the commitment to minimising the harmful effects of stress, the procedures that should be followed and who is responsible for each step.

The college is committed to providing a working environment and management practices which promote the best health of all employees. Part of that commitment is to minimise the risk of the harmful effects of stress by:

- Introducing workable policies and procedures
- Increasing awareness and understanding of stress related issues through training and health promotion
- Investigating all incidents of potential or actual work related stress
- Providing access to confidential welfare support services for any staff whose physical and/or mental health may have been injured by stress

Staff are encouraged to assist the college by reporting areas where stress management could be improved, reporting incidents of bullying/harassment etc and ensuring appropriate individual behaviour.

Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Provide advice and information about minimising risks
- Outline specific roles
- Educate staff about the causes, effects and management of stress
- Outline strategies intended to deal with individual cases of stress related illness
- Outline strategies intended to improve health at work

In order to achieve the policy aims, the college will:

- Carry out risk assessment to identify the scope and causes of stress related to work
- Implement control measures to minimise the risk of stress
- Monitor and audit the arrangements in an effort to continuously improve the quality of the working environment and the implemented stress-minimisation arrangements
- Raise awareness of the causes of stress, recognise the signs and symptoms of stress related illness and ways in which the college supports individuals
- Help departments to reduce the cost associated with uncontrolled work related stress
- Train managers about college stress management policies/procedures and how to apply them
- Educate employees in techniques for recognising and coping with potentially stressful situations
- Ensure that individuals who have, or have had symptoms of stress-related illness are treated responsibly and fairly at an early stage and that confidentiality is ensured
- Provide access to welfare services when required
- Consider job security, sick leave provision, retention of status etc in accordance with the rights of the individual to employment protection and in accordance with the college sickness absence policy
- Communicate effectively and 'manage change' in a sensitive and responsible manner

Responsibilities

The responsibility of managing stress lies with governors and senior managers who will negotiate with employee representatives.

The following people will have an involvement, as follows:

- Board of Governors will
- Senior Management will
- Human Resources will
- Line Management will
- Health and Safety Manager will
- Occupational Health will
- Counselling Services will
- Employees will
- Trade Unions will

Note: Individual organisations must describe the actual involvement of these functions within their own structure.

Annex 1 Information: Legal Background

Health and Safety Legislation

Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 obliges employers to safeguard, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of the people who work for them. This does not only mean physical health, but mental health as well. Ill health resulting from stress at work should be treated in the same way as ill health resulting from physical hazards in the workplace.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to assess risks to Health and Safety and implement avoidance and control measures.

Hazards that could lead to stress must, if significant, be included in the risk assessments.

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 incorporate the requirement for employers to minimise the risk of ill health, including stress, which may be caused by working with display screen equipment (computers).

The Working Time Regulations 1998 place limitations on the number of hours worked during an average working week, makes provision for rest breaks and so relate to stress caused by excessive working hours.

Employment Protection Legislation

The Employment Rights Act 1996 gives employees the right not to be unfairly dismissed. One of the possible reasons for dismissal relates to “the capability or qualifications of the employee for performing work of the kind which (s)he was employed to do”. Capability should be assessed in relation to “health or any other physical or mental quality”. When dismissing someone on the grounds of incapability, the employer must clearly establish the medical circumstances and ensure that fair procedures are followed.

Discrimination Legislation

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) states that discrimination occurs when a disabled person is treated less favourably “for a reason which relates to the person’s disability”. The act may relate to stress-related illnesses if the disability is such that the person “has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day to day activities.” A mental illness can only be a mental impairment if the person is suffering from a clinically recognised illness such as depression. The impairment must have lasted for at least 12 months or be reasonably expected to last that long.

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Race Relations Act 1976 give the right of access to employment tribunals to victims of discrimination. People who are discriminated against may find the experience distressing, humiliating and consequently may suffer from a stress-related illness. In successful cases, both the employer and the discriminator may be ordered to compensate the victim.

Common Law

There is a long established “common law” duty of care owed by employers to employees not the subject them to unnecessary risk. An employer will be liable in negligence for an employee’s stress related illness provided:

- It was reasonably foreseeable that the employee would suffer mental or physical illness
- It failed to take reasonable steps to prevent the illness
- The failure caused the ill health

Notes to Annex 1

As an employer, your college is responsible for making sure that work doesn't make employees ill. If you notice that someone is particularly vulnerable because of their circumstances, look at how their work is organised. See if there are ways to relieve the pressures so that they do not become excessive.

However, unless you know otherwise, you could assume that all your employees are mentally capable of withstanding reasonable pressure from work. "We're all vulnerable to stress, depending on the pressure we're under at any given time."(HSE leaflet Help on Work Related Stress – a short guide).

Once an employee has been identified as suffering from work related stress the college does "know otherwise" and needs to take this into account.

In the case of *Walker v Northumberland County Council* 1995, Mr Walker, a social worker, had a nervous breakdown because of stress and pressure of work after 17 years of employment. When he resumed work three months later the assistance he was promised was withdrawn after one month. Six months later he suffered a second nervous breakdown. The High Court decided that the employer was not negligent as regards the first nervous breakdown but was negligent in failing to take reasonable steps to prevent the second breakdown. Mr Walker received about £175,000 in an out-of-court settlement.

Court of Appeal Decisions February 2002

(*Sutherland v Hatton and other appeals* [2002] EWCA Civ 76.)

On 5 February 2002, the Court of Appeal considered appeals by four employers who had been ordered by county courts to pay compensation in respect of stress-related ill health suffered by their employees. Three of them succeeded in their appeals when the Court ruled that it had not been reasonably foreseeable that the employees would suffer from work-related stress and, accordingly, their employers had not been under a duty to take steps to prevent their ill health.

Whilst the Court of Appeal's decision is landmark, it does not introduce new law. However, it does provide practical guidance when determining whether an employer should be liable for compensating an employee who has suffered ill health arising from stress at work.

The Court stated that the “threshold question” that needs to be asked is whether “this kind of harm to this particular employee was reasonably foreseeable”. In short, was the injury to health attributable to stress at work and was it reasonably foreseeable. An employee must show that the employer’s breach of duty caused or materially contributed to his/her illness; it is not enough to show that occupational stress caused the harm. Compensation will be reduced to take account of pre-existing disorders or the chance that the employee would have fallen ill anyway.

The judges, Lady Justice Hale and Lords Justices Brooke and Kay, laid down a number of ‘practical propositions’ to help courts deal with future claims:

- Employers are generally entitled to take what they are told by employees at face value unless they have good reason to think otherwise. They do not have to make searching inquiries
- Employers are usually entitled to assume that employees can withstand the normal pressures of a job, unless they know of a particular problem or vulnerability
- An employer will not be in breach of duty in allowing a willing employee to continue in a stressful job if the only alternative is to dismiss or demote him or her. The employee must decide whether to risk a breakdown in his or her health by staying in the job
- To trigger a duty on the part of the employer to take action, indications of impending harm to health arising from stress at work must be plain enough to show that action should be taken
- There are no occupations which should be regarded as intrinsically dangerous to mental health. The employer is in breach of duty only if he or she fails to take steps which are reasonable, bearing in mind the size of the risk, the gravity of the harm, the costs of preventing it and the justification for running the risk
- Any employer who offers a confidential counselling advice service with access to treatment is unlikely to be found in breach of duty.

Numerous studies have highlighted the advantages of providing a staff counselling facility. Some notable results are summarised at Appendix VI

Balancing against this is a college’s duty, as an employer to take reasonable care to avoid harming staff. What is reasonable will depend upon the factors mentioned above.

Therefore, in considering its duty, a college should:

- Establish, via risk assessment, the facts relating to foreseeability, likelihood and severity, cost and practicability of prevention
- Take positive steps where signs of impending harm to health due to stress at work are plain enough for any reasonable employer to realise that something should be done
- Ensure that Human Resources, during selection procedures, emphasise, when appointing a person to a job, any particular aspects of it which may cause it to be stressful. This may include working in a particularly difficult or deprived region/city, working with students who pose particular challenges (such as those with learning or behavioural problems), long hours, government inspections, or funding constraints. The college should ask the potential employee to consider carefully whether he/she can cope with such demands. If the person indicates that they may be unable to do so, then the college will want to consider whether it is wise to offer them the job. (See AoC Employment Briefing 12/02)

Annex 2(a) Workplace Causes of Stress

There are many causes of work related stress and individuals cope in many different ways. There are six major categories of stress:

Intrinsic to the Job:

- Physical working conditions – noise, temperature, lighting, workplace design, inadequate welfare facilities, badly maintained buildings, inadequate or poorly sited equipment etc
- Isolation from others, overcrowding etc
- Lack of a Health and Safety culture
- Deadlines and Targets
- Shift work
- Long hours
- Travel
- New Technology
- Work overload
- Boring/repetitive work

Role in the Organisation:

- Role ambiguity –no clear work objectives, no clarity re scope and responsibilities
- Role conflict. Related to job demands, personal wants, dislikes, perception of how jobs should be done etc
- Responsibility – for people and for things

Relationships at Work:

- Lack of recognition and support from managers and co-workers
- Bullying by managers or other members of staff
- Racial, sexual or other forms of harassment
- Conflicts between members of staff

Organisational Structure and Climate:

- Organisational Structure and Climate
- No sense of belonging/being part of the team
- Lack of opportunities to participate in briefings/meetings etc
- Not Included in communications and consultations
- No involvement in decision making
- Poor management culture
- Too many demands
- Lack of control by staff over their own jobs
- Poor management of change

Career Development:

- Training – Poor quality and/or lack of opportunities
- Job security – Lack of promotion, opportunities for
- Advancement etc
- Job performance – Inconsistent and/or ineffective evaluation and appraisal procedures, targets etc

Home - Work Interface:

- Conflict between organisational and family demands

Having identified some of the causes of stress it could be useful to remember that **individual and organisational health are interdependent**, in the sense that organisational hazards can create substantial ill-health amongst employees, and distressed employees can cause substantial organisational dysfunction. It follows that organisations will be more productive if workers are motivated and healthy.

Notes to Annex 2(a)

The HSE free leaflet "Work related Stress: A Short Guide" gives some examples of causes of work related stress and possible solutions.

Occupational Stress Audit.

Many audit tools are available to purchase from specialist companies who will also carry out the audit for a college. This might provide an acceptably objective report but it is possible for a college to gather similar information via an internal process.

Annex 2(b) Effects and Symptoms of Stress

People perceive demands in different ways – as either challenging or threatening. Demands can lead to personal growth, satisfaction and fulfilment. However, when demands are perceived as threatening, mental and physical health can be affected.

Effects on the individual

In the short term the individual may cope well as (s)he tries to adjust or find methods of coping with the demands. Over a longer period of time, as the individual's body and mind are subjected to a perceived prolonged threat or attack, a variety of symptoms related to ill health could occur and these may be followed by serious stress-related illness.

It is usually recognised that stress can affect the body in three different ways, **physically**, **behaviourally** and **emotionally**. Individuals can suffer from one, or a combination of these symptoms, for both short or long-term periods.

Physical symptoms include:	Behavioural symptoms include:	Emotional symptoms include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backache • Fatigue • Muscle tension • Skin rashes • Breathing difficulties • Headaches • Chest pains • Changes in menstrual patterns • Sweating palms, dry mouth, nervous twitches etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absenteeism • Erratic moods • Apathy • Increased use of alcohol/tobacco • Increased use of tranquillisers • Indecision • Unusually emotive or impulsive • Accidents • Loss of appetite • Evading duties responsibilities • Complaining 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety • Irritability • Low self-esteem and confidence • Depression • Loss of libido • Guilt • Fear and panic • Poor sleep • Aggression • Inappropriate behaviour • Withdrawal from social contacts • Mood swings

Effects on the College

Work related stress can also lead to organisational problems:

- An increase in sickness absence, which can have a domino effect - one person goes sick which leads to their workload being shared among the remaining staff. They are unable to cope, which affects their health, and this leads to greater sickness absence
- A reduction in staff morale
- Resistance to change
- Poor staff performance
- Poor time keeping
- Poor decision making
- Increased accident rates
- Staff seeking alternative employment. Organisations then have the expense of recruiting, inducting, and training new members of staff
- Poor industrial relations
- Increased costs associated with the above
- Poor community image
- Possible criminal cases and civil claims with associated costs

Notes to Annex 2(b)

Theories of how and why an individual reacts to demands include:

- “It depends on how the person interprets or appraises (consciously or unconsciously) the significance of a harmful, threatening or challenging event.” Richard S. Lazarus
- (Stress is) “part of a complex and dynamic system of transaction between the person and his environment.”

Both quotes cited in Earnshaw J and Cooper C (2001) Stress and Employer Liability, p10, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

Annex 3(a) Guidance and Procedures

In meeting their liabilities employers need to demonstrate a pro-active approach to safety management by identifying and controlling weaknesses that endanger people and/or the services provided by the college. Judging the significance of potential dangerous activities and working conditions generally, is best achieved by adopting a regime of risk assessment.

Risk Assessment

The law requires employers to assess risk and record significant risks. A basic five step risk assessment method approach advocated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE, 1997) provides a systematic and logical method of assessing the risk. It will enable the college to:

- Identify the main causes of work related stress in the college
- Determine the extent of work related stress amongst all different categories of staff
- Determine the current effects of work related stress on employee physical, mental and social health
- Identify who might be harmed and why
- Identify any existing control measures to minimise stress and make recommendations where measures are found to be unsatisfactory
- Prioritise an action plan

A practical method for carrying out risk assessment is outlined in Annex 3(b)

Step 1. Identify the hazard.

Identify what it is about the work that has the potential to cause a stress-related illness. This could be done by using a stress survey, talking to staff, use of questionnaires, analysis of sickness absence rates etc.

Step 2. Identify who might be harmed and why.

Identify who is at risk (look at staff affected, how long they are exposed to the stressful situation, any particularly vulnerable workers).

Step 3. Evaluate the risk.

Consider control measures already in place. There is a preferred hierarchy for control measures. The first and most desirable is to remove the sources of stress, if this possible. The next most effective measure is to find ways of reducing the amount of stress experienced by workers. The workforce should be consulted about how to achieve this. Measures introduced to minimise the risk of stress should be reasonably practicable. That is, the cost of putting in place the control measures does not exceed the cost of benefits to be gained. Further details of stress control measures are at Appendix II.

After identifying the control measures already in place the risk can be evaluated. An estimate should be made of:

- The likelihood that stress will occur, given the control measures in place
- The severity or consequences of harm which could occur

It is possible to evaluate the risk quantitatively as detailed in appendices X and Y but inevitably the actual judgement of risk will be subjective.

Step 4. Record the findings.

Record findings of any significant risk and put into place in new control measures. The findings provide:

- Proof that the statutory duty for risk assessment has been carried out
- A basis for revision of the assessment

It is also very important to produce a written action plan which includes details of the controls, together with details of who will carry out each action and when.

Step 5. Monitor and review.

The effectiveness of measures to control stress and address stress related problems should be monitored. This can be done by:

- Comparing sickness and absence levels
- Comparing accidents and incidents
- Reviewing complaints and staff turnover
- Using satisfaction questionnaires

The assessment should be reviewed as the nature of work changes (identified by monitoring), or if the assessment needs to be changed in any way. Regular monitoring should be made of sickness absence figures and interventions made when required.

Notes to Annex 3(a)

A report published by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in January 2001, Baseline Measurements for the Evaluation of the Work Related Stress Campaign, found that 40% of employers had taken measures to reduce work related stress. In 35% of cases, the steps taken took the form of primary-level intervention (ie reducing stress at source).

The HSE is currently working on detailed plans for management standards to tackle work related stress and is due to issue new guidance. In the meantime, the HSE advises employers to follow their current guidance outlined in "Work related stress – a short guide".

This states that employers must assess the risk of stress at work by:

- Looking for pressures at work which could cause high and long-lasting levels of stress
- Deciding who may be harmed by these
- Deciding whether they are doing enough to prevent that harm

The guidance outlines six points of good management to prevent stress from becoming a problem.

Employers should:

- Take stress seriously and be understanding to staff under too much pressure
- Encourage managers to have an open and understanding attitude and to look for signs of stress among staff
- Ensure that staff have the skills, training and resources they need
- Provide scope for varying working conditions and flexibility, and for people to influence the way their jobs are done
- Ensure that people are treated fairly and consistently and that bullying and harassment are not tolerated

Ensure good two-way communication, especially at times of change

If staff are on sick leave due to work related stress, the HSE advises discussing options such as returning to work to do part of the job, working reduced hours or doing a different job, before they are ready to return to their normal work.

Annex 3(b) Risk Assessment Model

This model uses examples of techniques, based on the HSE's 'Five Steps' approach.

Steps 1 and 2. Identify the hazard, who might be harmed and how.

Useful tools include:

- Stress Survey. An occupational stress survey is a powerful tool which can indicate:
 - the major causes of stress
 - the departments and occupations most affected by stress

Basic Stress Survey methodology. Divide staff into different categories according to job type, for example:

- academic staff
- administration staff
- manual workers
- technicians
- middle Managers
- senior Managers

Using a questionnaire (example at Appendix III), or in a focus group, ask a representative sample of each group (separately and confidentially):

- what causes stress in their work
- what is the best thing about their work
- if and in what way their health has been affected by stress

Alternatively, commission a specialist agency to carry out a survey for you.

- HR monitoring activity. Identify cases of sickness absence due to stress from records. Calculate:
 - how many working days have been lost due to stress-related illness (you can only count the ones you know about and this should be stated on the sickness absence certificate)
 - the cost to your college

Identify the areas where sickness absence due to stress is the greatest.

- Feedback from staff and union representatives

Step 3. Evaluate the risk.

A 'Risk Profile Chart', (as exemplified on the next page) using qualitative values, is suggested as a means of obtaining a measured risk result.

Step 4. Record the findings.

Record the findings of any significant risk and prepare an action plan containing details of:



- Actions required (any additional, reasonably practicable, control measures)
- Person detailed to carry out each action
- Date by which each action should be completed

The action plan should be signed off when the control measures are in place.

Step 5. Monitor and review.

Once any necessary additional controls are in place, the procedures should be revisited:

- As the nature of work changes
- If the assessment needs to be changed in any way
- Regularly

<p>Likelihood: Opportunity of stress hazard being active.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constantly obvious, even to outsiders. Formal reports and/or pressure from T.U.s. Demands tabled for change/improvement 	B	B	A	A
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easy to detect the signs Recallable incidents Regular reports from TU and others with approaches made 	B	B	A	A
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occasional reports, confirming pressure as a normal characteristic of the scene/role 	C	C	B	B
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most unlikely An odd complaint No record of any previous/current concerns 	C	C	B	B
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No cases or signs observed or reported 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occasional isolated problems Some low morale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Similar problems from related groups Low morale Patterns of problem behaviour can be observed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ill health conditions recorded Widespread low morale Patterns of problem behaviour are obvious Group breakdown. Work is interrupted
	<p>Severity: The perceived problems/outcomes.</p> 				

Risks can be categorised, using the chart, to produce a simple, but understandable result, as follows:

- A Significant Risk. Situation too dangerous or unsafe. **Stop the activity!**
- B Significant Risk. Activity can continue providing controlling factors are reliable.
- C Risk is Insignificant. No action necessary.

Appendix I: Definitions used in this Policy and Associated Procedures

Stress

Stress is a difficult and complex subject. There are many definitions and causes of stress. In addition, individuals and organisations react to stress in different ways. The HSE define stress as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them”.

This definition can be used as the basis for any activity to prevent, control or manage stress in the workplace. It recognises that people may have to work to deadlines or be stimulated by a degree of pressure in their work but it is when the pressure becomes ‘excessive’, or goes on for too long, that people become exposed to stress.

Stress is incapacitating and causes actual damage to health. In the individual this can lead to physical and/or mental ill health, including high blood pressure, heart disease, dependence on alcohol/smoking or drugs, anxiety and depression. In the organisation the effects may include low morale, reduced productivity and quality, increased absenteeism and accident rates, poor industrial relations and higher staff turnover.

Demands

Demands may be challenging, good for you, essential in a dynamic, constantly changing and improving organisation. Conversely they may be excessive (this depends on individual thresholds) or perceived as threatening and lead to stress - which is never good for you and can lead to ill health and even death. Some people may feel ‘unhappy’ and define this as stress, but stress is not a fleeting period of sadness, frustration, unhappiness etc that everyone feels from time to time.

Hazard

In this policy a hazard is something (demand) with the potential to cause harm (stress-related illness). Perceived pressures or demands are hazards and are often referred to as ‘stressors’.

Risk

An Estimate of the likelihood that harm (stress-related illness) will occur, and the severity of that harm, given the control measures in place.

If the hazard is not removed, or the risk limited and controlled, then damage to health can result.

Notes to Appendix I

Other definitions of stress include:

“An incapacitating emotional or physical state experienced by a person when they are unable to cope with the demands put on them”. (Professor Tom Cox 1998.)

“An adaptive response, moderated by individual differences, that is a consequence of any action, situation or event that places special demands on a person¹ which perceives an imbalance between the level of demand placed upon them and their capability to meet those demands”. (J. Cranewell-Ward.1995.)

“The harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources or needs of the individual” (National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health.)

Appendix II: Workplace Interventions/Control Measures

Examples of control measures include:

Primary (preferred) Control Measures

(Designed to eliminate the sources of stress at Organisational level)

- Stress being specifically included in Organisational policies and procedures, eg:
 - Equal Opportunities
 - Mental Health
 - sickness absence
 - harassment/bullying
 - Health and Safety
 - codes of practice
- Clearly defined objectives and responsibilities linked to college business objectives
- Training related to how everyone fits into the organisation and their role in achieving the objectives
- Culture or climate of positive reinforcement (for example Managers thanking staff, or rewards for achieving targets)
- Clearly defined job roles and lines of management
- Open and transparent pay policies
- Measures to ensure that recruitment and retention issues are addressed
- Reasonable and achievable workload and performance targets
- Provision of family friendly/flexible working arrangements
- Appropriate and efficient use of appraisal and review systems
- Equal opportunities for training and career progression
- Provision of clean and pleasant working environment

Secondary Control Measures

(Designed to reduce the level of stress to a minimum)

- Provision of training
 - for managers about stress and its management
 - for employees about recognition of stress and college policies and procedures
- Clear and confidential lines of reporting incidents

Tertiary Control Measures

(Designed to minimise the effects of stress after it has occurred)

- Provision of Occupational Health services, Counselling and other support services

Tertiary intervention techniques are normally introduced when a stress situation has already activated a stress condition. Therefore, to resort to the use of 'Tertiary Control Measures' as a first step action, could be viewed as a failure to pro-actively identify and manage possible stress causing situations correctly – in other words a failure to exercise proper safety management.

Appendix III: Example: Well-Person Questionnaire

The aim of this questionnaire is to find out if there is harmful stress in your area of work and, if so, to identify the main causes so that any risks to your Health and Safety can be eliminated or minimised. The information you give is confidential.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Please read the questions in each section very carefully
- Tick the box which applies
- Please be honest and constructive in your comments. For example, if you are not satisfied with your physical working environment, briefly explain what is wrong with it and how you would improve it. If you are very satisfied with something, briefly say why

Name of School/Department					
Are you:		Are you:		Are you a Manager?	
Academic Staff	Support Staff	Male	Female	Y	N

Appendix III:
Example: Well-Person
Questionnaire

Section 1. Your Job		Yes	No	Constructive comments (eg if NO, why not). Continue overleaf if necessary.
1	Are you satisfied with your job generally?			
2	Do you think that your skills, knowledge and experiences match the requirements of your job?			
3	Do you think that your skills, knowledge and experience are being used as much as you would like them to be?			
4	Do you think that class preparation time is adequate?			
5	Do you think that you have adequate resources to be able to do your job?			
6	Do you think that your workload is just about right?			
7	Do you think that the deadlines/ targets you are given are reasonable and achievable?			
8	Do you think that the health, safety and welfare of staff are a priority within the college?			
9	Are you satisfied with your physical working environment? (Heating, lighting, space, equipment etc.)			
10	Are you satisfied with the facilities available for food and drink?			
11	Do you think that you have opportunities within your working day for rest and relaxation or exercise?			
12	Are you satisfied with the facilities available to staff for:			
	i Counselling?			
	ii Health Advice and Information?			
	iii Safety Advice and Information?			

Section 2. Your Role				
		Yes	No	Constructive comments (eg if NO, why not). Continue overleaf if necessary.
1	Are you satisfied with your level of involvement in the decision-making processes?			
2	Do you think that your work is appreciated and seen as valuable?			
3	Do you have a clearly defined job description and duties?			
Section 3. Your Relationships at Work				
		Yes	No	Constructive comments (eg if NO, why not). Continue overleaf if necessary.
1	Are you satisfied that you and your colleagues assist and support one another?			
2	Are you satisfied with the way staff at work relate to each other?			
3	Are you satisfied that you are not being bullied or harassed at work in any way?			
4	Are you satisfied with the opportunities you have of receiving and giving feedback amongst your colleagues?			
5	Are you satisfied with the way you relate to students/customers?			
6	Are you satisfied with the way students/customers relate to you?			

Section 4. Your Career Development				
		Yes	No	Constructive comments (eg if NO, why not). Continue overleaf if necessary.
1	Are you satisfied with the amount of training available to you at work?			
2	Are you satisfied with the quality of training that you receive?			
3	Do you think that the opportunities to progress and develop through training are fair to everyone?			
4	Are you satisfied with the staff induction programme?			
5	Are you satisfied with the appraisal and review system?			
6	Do you feel there are opportunities available in college to enable you to progress in your career?			
7	Do you feel you are encouraged to progress in your career?			
Section 5. Your Organisational Structure and Climate				
		Yes	No	Constructive comments (eg if NO, why not). Continue overleaf if necessary.
1	Are you satisfied with the communication methods that exist in college?			
2	Do you reckon that you are treated as an individual?			
3	Are you satisfied with the overall management structure of the college?			

Section 6. Home – Work Interface				
		Yes	No	Constructive comments (eg if NO, why not). Continue overleaf if necessary.
1	Do you think that your home or social life is affected detrimentally by the events that happen at work?			
2	Do you think that your work is affected detrimentally by the events that happen at home or in your social life?			
3	During the last year, have you had time off work because of ill health which you think was caused by stress at work?			
4	Do you feel your health is being affected by your work?			
	i Your physical health?			
	ii Your mental or emotional health?			
5	Do you find you are smoking or drinking alcohol more, or using drugs to help you cope with problems at work?			
Section 7. Good Things About Work				
		Yes	No	Constructive comments (eg if NO, why not). Continue overleaf if necessary.
1	What are the best things about your work?			

If there is anything else related to your work which may be causing you harmful stress, or if you have any further constructive comments to make, please record below or on a separate piece of paper.

Please return the questionnaire to: _____

If you need any confidential help, support, information or advice, about this or any health related subject please telephone: _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Appendix IV: Resolving Stress In The Workplace – A Formal Tracking Protocol

Resolution of stress can best be achieved by setting up a small assessment team which should include senior management, HR, and employee representatives.

Stage 1: Identify the problem.

- Collect information regarding the circumstances, from all contributing sources (for example Risk Assessments, reports from Safety Committee or Safety Representatives)
- Consult the list of conditions (see annex 2b) arising from stress and identify where there is evidence of these conditions
- Mark the relevant condition(s) in the Problem column of the checklist

Stage 2: Identify causes.

- Brainstorm why those condition(s) may be arising. (Consult Workplace Causes List, annex 2a)
- Mark the agreed (consensus) hazards in the Cause Column of the Checklist
- Measure the Risk, using the Risk Assessment Graph and award the considered Risk Level to each hazard

Stage 3: Identify a solution.

- Refer to the list of suggested routes for solution (see Interventions/Control Measures), as appropriate to each cause/hazard group
- Mark those in the Solution column
- Agree the most practicable approach towards implementing that solution
- Mark that approach into the Solution Column
- Allocate the task of implementing the agreed solution and the date of the exercise into the tracking column
- Agree a review date

Stage 4: Action tracking and review.

- Identify success/improvements
- Identify incomplete solutions and the reasons why
- Implement action from outcome
- Re-Risk Grade circumstances
- Keep records (as per accident/incident records)

Checklist Stress: Causes and Solutions

Stage 1: Problem (Use the box that applies to the problem, Personal: use 'Medical' or 'Behavioural' Staff in general: use 'The Group')		Stage 2: Cause			Stage 3: Solution		Stage 4: Action Tracking & Review		
Ill Health, Personal or Organisational Conditions	Information Source	Potential Source or Hazards (Refer to List)	Evidence as Identified or Confirmed	Risk Level	Possible Solutions (See Suggested List)	Agreed Action to be Taken (Consensus)	Who By	Date Done	Review Date
Medical/Physiological (Requires GP Cert.)		Working Conditions							
Headaches									
Backaches									
Vision/Eyes									
Skin allergies		Organisational							
Dist. sleeping		The Organisation							
Mental Health									
Other (State)									
Individual Behaviour		How it is managed							
Job Performance									
Personal habits									
Personal mannerisms		Roles/the Job							
		Social Relationships							
Traits by the Group									
The Work									
		Career/Opportunity							
Attendance									
		The Individual							
Quality/Results		The Person							
		Their Background							

Appendix V Stress Management Checklist

The following (non-exhaustive) list includes commonly suggested actions for effective management of work-related stress:

	Needed	In place
Commitment by senior management which is evidenced, for example, by their presence at meetings and training sessions.		
Involvement of trade union and workplace representatives at an early stage. Conducting an audit of stress as part of the risk assessment process and reviewing this regularly.		
Ensuring that, when appointing a person to a job, the interview procedure emphasises any particular aspects of it which may cause it to be stressful.		
Developing a clear policy statement and guidance about how the organisation intends to deal with stress.		
Ensuring that the related policies support this strategy, for example the sickness absence policy, flexible working policy etc.		
Ensure that legislation (in areas such as working time) is adhered to.		
Put in place training courses which provide management development and also sessions which provide information about how to manage stress and identify the signs.		
Following up the results of the stress audit, for example examining methods of work and making alterations to the working environment.		
Monitoring and evaluating on a regular basis so that adjustments can be made.		
Ensure that good communication channels are in place so that staff and managers know what is expected of them both in relation to their job roles but also if problems arise.		
Put in place curative measures such as Employee Assistance Programmes and other benefits which signal to staff that they are valued and their contribution welcomed, but which can also provide real assistance to those in need.		

The college should also ensure that it has in place Guidance Procedures for the following circumstances:

- If a member of staff is concerned that they, or another member of staff, may be experiencing symptoms of stress
- If there is concern that a work activity could cause stress

Such procedures will need to be tailored to suit local circumstances but will need to be practicable and publicised to all staff.

Appendix VI: Positive Effects of Provision of Accredited Staff Counselling

Absence

Post Office – four year study of counselling by Cary Cooper:

- 53% reduction in number of absences in those counselled
- 74% reduction in duration of absences in those counselled

Lothian Council Education Dept:

- 55.6% reduction in three months post-counselling
- 62.5% in six months post-counselling
- Above taken from: NHS Executive report. Provision of Counselling Services
<http://www.doh.gov.uk/pdfs/nhscounsellingservices.pdf>

HSE Contract Research Report 167 on Employee Assistance Programmes:

- Statistically significant reduction in levels of sickness absence in those counselled

Cost-effectiveness

Counselling in the workplace: The Facts. A Systematic Study of the Research Evidence.
John McLeod:

- All published studies showed that benefits at least cover costs
- Some show substantial positive ratios of between 4.5:1 and 9:1 ie benefits of £4.50 to £9.00 for every £1.00 invested

How effective is workplace counselling? A review of the Research Literature. Counselling and Psychotherapy Research 1(3) (2001) 184-190:

- 16 studies sufficiently well designed to give reliable findings
- Results suggest that workplace counselling is effective for a wide range of clients, types of problem and severity of problem

Lothian Council Education Dept:

- Saving calculated as £4,000 per employee counselled

London Transport:

- Counselling unit saved £400,000 in first year of operation

Service Level

The NHS Exec paper recommends:

- One counsellor per 2,000 staff, assuming counsellor has only counselling duties
- More needed if self-administrating

Other Benefits

Leeds/Sheffield NHS Trust:

- Significant reduction in levels of psychiatric disturbance (from 87% to 27%)

Post Office study:

- Reduction in use of other HR resources
- 19% reduction in frequency and duration of unauthorised absences in those counselled
- 50% reduction in disciplinary proceedings

Author: Dr Alan Swann, BM, AFOM

Director of Occupational Health, Imperial College Health Centre, London

Appendix VII: Further Guidance

The following organisations offer information on work related stress:

The Employment Medical Advisory Service (EMAS) can offer free advice on work related health matters.

EMAS
Priestley House
Priestley Road
Basingstoke
Hants

Tel: 01256 404000

InfoLine, a confidential HSE phone service. Calls charged at the national call rate.

Tel: 0541 545500

Advice on choosing external consultants is available from **The British Psychological Society**:

The British Psychological Society
St Andrews House
Leicester LE1 7DR

Tel: 0116 254 9568

Appendix VIII Relevant Publications

Stress at work: A guide for employers. HSG116 1995

HSE Books ISBN 0 7176 0733 X

Five steps to risk assessment. INDG163(rev) 1998

HSE Books ISBN 0 7176 1565 0

Work related stress - a short guide. INDG281

HSE Books ISBN ISBN 0 7176 2112 X.

**Managing occupational stress: A guide for managers and teachers in the schools sector
HSC Education Services Advisory Committee 1990**

HSE Books ISBN 0 7176 0540 X

Provides good general advice that isn't only relevant to those working in schools.

**Mental well-being in the workplace: A resource pack for management training
and development**

HSE Books ISBN 0 7176 1524 3

Selecting a Health and Safety consultancy. INDG133

HSE Books

HSE Enforcement Guidance: Occupational Stress - OC202/2

Obtainable from any HSE Office

Stress and Employer Liability (Earnshaw & Cooper)

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, IPD House, Camp Road,
London SW19 4UX or available from most good bookshops

Employment Briefing 12/02: Workplace Stress – a guide for employers

Health & Safety Briefing 3/01: Management of Work-related Stress

Health & Safety Briefing 11/99: Managing Stress – National Initiative

**Health & Safety Briefing 16/99: AoC Response To HSC Discussion Document “Managing
Stress At Work”**

Association of Colleges