Assessing the risk of stress in the workplace
This guidance will cover...

- What is a stress risk assessment?
- What does risk mean?
- What are control measures?
- What measures can I implement?
- How do I interpret results?
- What are reasonable adjustments?
- How to store and review completed stress risk assessments
- What support services are available, and how do I access them?
Network Rail’s vision for employee wellbeing

“we want our people to feel positive, have a sense of purpose and be able to handle every day pressures”

Health & Wellbeing – Stress in the workplace
Key points of the stress risk standard

- It provides an effective and consistent process with guidance for line managers on how Network Rail manages the risk of work related stress.

- The tool is designed to assess and mitigate the risk of workplace stress occurring and helps mitigate the risk of continued harm due to workplace stress.

- It acts as a control measure that manages risk of stress in workplace to protect the health and wellbeing of employees.

- The risk score enables the right level of intervention to be put in place for the employee.

- We are legally compliant with the principles of the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Management Standards for Work Related Stress.

The Standard does not: address the implications of personal stress or apply to contractors working for Network Rail.

Health & Wellbeing – Stress in the workplace
When should I use the assessment?

- If the line manager suspects a team member is under excessive workplace pressure
- If the line manager is made aware that an employee is experiencing excessive workplace pressure
- As part of a return to work process following any absence relating to stress
- If an employee discloses that they believe they are being affected by workplace pressure of stress
- If the outcome of a stress assessment reveals personal related stress – refer to Validium EAP, NHS IAPT, Mental Health Charities, Internal support groups/D&I/Wellbeing Champions

The Standard does not:
address the implications of personal stress or apply to contractors working for Network Rail

Health & Wellbeing – Stress in the workplace
Preparing for an assessment meeting

- Meetings should take place in a room or quiet private space
- Give employee/team members prior notice of the intention to carry out an assessment
- Employees must agree to the assessment being carried out
- If an employee does not agree undergo the assessment, you should consider:
  - Offering a colleague to accompany them
  - Offer an alternative manager to carry out the assessment
  - If this is unsuccessful; seek support from HR Direct
- If the assessment is still refused– the manager should record the employees refusal i.e. in writing to employee by email and a copy should be recorded on the HR direct case file and/or employee record.

Support can only be made based on what the line manager/or person carrying out the assessment is aware of.

Health & Wellbeing – Stress in the workplace
Preparing an employee for an assessment

- Discuss with the employee the reason for carrying out the assessment and explain how it will be used i.e. understand level of pressure they are under and identify support measures required
- Explain that it is confidential and how it will be stored i.e. on their employee file
- Advise that they will receive a copy of the assessment
- Employee can have a colleague or Trade Union rep accompany them for the assessment

Health & Wellbeing – Stress in the workplace
What does the assessment include?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Headings to be Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Page 1</strong></td>
<td>Subject of Risk Assessment – (Team/Individual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress Risk Assessment Form</td>
<td>Number of Employees – (number or persons being assessed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front page</td>
<td>Reason or Trigger for Risk Assessment – (initial issue raised)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Current Control Measures – (What is already in place)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Page 2-5</strong></td>
<td>1. Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Essential Factors of Workplace</td>
<td>2. Job Security and Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure</td>
<td>3. Balance Workload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Job Conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Resources and Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Work Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Page 6</strong></td>
<td>Risk Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report</td>
<td>Risk Management Decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comments to Justify Decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make an action plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Health & Wellbeing – Stress in the workplace
## Workplace pressures controls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workplace Pressure</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Limitations on how the job is done/or freedom to make decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job security</td>
<td>Pressure from change and uncertainty about the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance workload</td>
<td>Peaks and troughs in workload, difficult deadlines, unsocial hours, work-life balance challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job conditions</td>
<td>Pressure from working conditions/ environment/culture/pay and benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources and communications</td>
<td>Pressure from lack of resources or access to information or communication (in/out)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work relationships</td>
<td>High pressure relationships from colleagues, customers or managers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additional control measures

Additional questions help identify any missing control measures that are not in place.

(Some questions may not be relevant. Additional controls can be added if appropriate)

Control measures help to:

- reduce identified risks
- identify measures of control that are not in place
- consult the employee or team members as part of the process of assessment
- consider controls listed and/or establish new control measures
- decide and agree on the most appropriate controls to put in place

Health & Wellbeing – Stress in the workplace
What is the definition of risk?

Severity Score = Severity of the potential stress/harm posed as a result of pressure

Likelihood Score = Likelihood of Risk Happening or not

Overall Risk = 

\[
\text{Severity of Harm (i.e. Pressure)} \times \text{Likelihood of occurrence (i.e. of Stress)}
\]

Refer to Overall Risk Table

Health & Wellbeing – Stress in the workplace
### Scoring the assessment - Likelihood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Score 1:</strong> 'Remote' - 1</td>
<td>There is very little or no risk of the pressure causing harm/stress. All reasonable precautions have been taken.</td>
<td><strong>No Action - No immediate risk</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Score 2:</strong> 'Unlikely' - 2</td>
<td>Potential risk of pressure causing harm/stress. Risk is minimal and the probability is still low.</td>
<td><strong>Minimal risk of harm/ongoing stress – immediate intervention – consider ways to omit potential risk</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Score 3:</strong> 'Possible' - 3</td>
<td>Possible risk that pressure causes harm/ongoing stress. If additional factors contribute to it, but it is unlikely to happen without them.</td>
<td><strong>Possible harm/stress – (possible risk imminent) immediate intervention - discuss ways to omit immediate risk plan put in place</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Score 4:</strong> 'Likely' - 4</td>
<td>Current or ongoing pressure will likely cause harm/stress. If additional factors contribute to it will cause further harm/stress</td>
<td><strong>Likely harm/stress - (Current risk and ongoing risk) intervention needs more structured approach – remove immediate risk that can be omitted – plan put in place</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Score 5:</strong> 'Almost Certain' - 5</td>
<td>It will almost certainly cause further mental distress and employees/team could be injured or cause injury due to work related stress.</td>
<td><strong>Highly likely or Evident harm/stress - (high risk of stress/harm) immediate intervention required – remove immediate risk that can be omitted – make referral - plan put in place</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Health & Wellbeing – Stress in the workplace**
### Scoring the assessment - Severity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Score 1: 'Insignificant'</strong></td>
<td>This is based on existing evidence. This can include one off situations and short term stress not requiring medical intervention.</td>
<td>Monitor and Review- no more than 6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Score 2: 'Minor'</strong></td>
<td>There are some concerns displayed over a period of time, but they are minor.</td>
<td>Maintain Situation: – mitigate risk by managing issues. Support is given by line manager and work colleagues. Consider: EAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Score 3: 'Moderate'</strong></td>
<td>Stress displayed could follow extreme pressure, a traumatic work situation or occur over a longer period of time. It can potentially, cause ill health and might require intervention. Can lead to a “severe”.</td>
<td>Manage Solutions – Look at immediate solutions. Consider: Occupational Health Referral/EAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Score 4: 'Severe'</strong></td>
<td>Likely result of a excessive pressure causing stress related illness causing incapacity to work and requiring medical intervention.</td>
<td>Intervention Required – Reasonable adjustments advised. Consider: Occupational Health Referral/EAP (advise OH Manager)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Score 5: 'Extreme'</strong></td>
<td>Likely Stress related ill health that is extreme and leads to long term/ongoing or permanent incapacity to work in the same way as before or work at all.</td>
<td>Immediate Intervention Required – Occupational Health Referral – Offer EAP and See TRIM* Standards and (advise OH Manager)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- *Trauma Risk: Result of one off event/or continued events –may lead to PTSD
- If Bullying / Harrassment refer to Policy and guidance also

### Health & Wellbeing – Stress in the workplace
### Health & Wellbeing – Stress in the workplace

**The Results.. Severity x Likelihood = Risk level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LOW</strong> 1 – 3</td>
<td>Acceptable</td>
<td>• No further action required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Review and monitor to ensure any controls in place are maintained and the situation does not change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MODERATE</strong> 4-6</td>
<td>Requires some action</td>
<td>• Make effort to work together to find solutions to reduce the risk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensure any changes are carefully measured and are kept to a low or moderate level.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Share findings with local OH Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HIGH</strong> 8-12</td>
<td>Requires Immediate Action</td>
<td>• Methods to reduce risks should be implemented immediately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Consider restricting activity until control measures are implemented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensure control measures are maintained and reviewed regularly.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Refer employees to the occupational health provider within two working weeks to avoid unnecessary prolonging or worsening of their condition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Immediate medical referral and inform employee of reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Inform local OH Manager of results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VERY HIGH</strong> 15 or above</td>
<td>Intolerable, requires immediate action</td>
<td>• Substantial improvements of risk control measures are necessary to ensure risk is reduced to a low or moderate level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Activities should be stopped until controls are in place and carefully monitored once implemented.</td>
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Next steps: Actions

- Decide 'what' actions should be taken and ‘why’ - consider the output and its benefit
- Confirm ‘who' will be responsible for 'what'
- Confirm ‘when’ and ‘which’ actions will be taken - Clear timescales should be given
- Confirm if a medical referral is to be arranged with occupational health
- Arrange ‘when’ the review meetings will take place and provide the 1st meeting date
- Discuss ‘what’ adjustments can be made immediately i.e. flexible working or workload adjustments and that further adjustments can be made pending medical referral and advice

Health & Wellbeing – Stress in the workplace
Reasonable adjustments: Legislation

A reasonable adjustment helps remove the barriers an employee faces to staying employed as such it enables employees to continue their job with the required support and interventions. Disability also includes mental health conditions.

The Equality Act 2010 requires Network Rail to make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants and disabled employees who are:

- continuing to work
- Being promoted
- redeployed
- seconded

Reasonable adjustments will be required where a physical feature, provision, criterion or practice puts someone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage.

It would be seen as discriminatory to refuse to consider or make reasonable adjustments which would allow a disabled applicant to work for Network Rail or a disabled employee to return to work and/or continue to work at Network Rail.

Refer to the “Reasonable Adjustments” policy for guidance

Health & Wellbeing – Stress in the workplace
HSE guidelines: Key steps to planning adjustments

- Consider the needs of the employee and what they can do
- Assess possible obstacles to the employee’s ability to work or return to work
- Consider what adjustments are needed to overcome these obstacles
- Review health and safety risk assessments in the light of the proposed adjustments
- Review how well the adjustments work
- Seek professional advice, where necessary, to help you make informed decisions
Storing stress risk assessments

- Employees should be given a copy of their stress risk assessment

- File the stress risk assessment:
  - hard copy in a locked secure cabinet that has restricted access* or:
  - File electronic copy in a restricted folder* and:
  - Upload electronically completed documents to HRSS for the employees personal file*;
    EmployeeRecords@networkrail.co.uk

Team risk assessments should remain accessible to all team members
Individual copies to be stored as noted

Health & Wellbeing – Stress in the workplace
Reviewing your risk assessment

Remember: people and workplaces rarely stay the same....

- Have there been any significant changes?
- Are there improvements you still need to make?
- Does the intervention need to change - is it still current/applicable?
- Has your team/employees spotted a problem?
- Is there a new situation?
- Have you learnt anything from the situations/incidents/near misses – what have you done to mitigate this risk going forward?

Good practice: carry out a stress risk assessment on your team annually to measure if interventions you have put in have actually worked or may need to change because the workplace has changed

Health & Wellbeing – Stress in the workplace
Reviewing your risk assessment

- Assessing the risk of Stress is a 'legal' requirement
- Record the ‘significant’ findings
- 'Prioritise' risks and deal with most 'serious' risks first
- Always keep stress risk assessments up to date by reviewing them
- File the risk assessment - it is evidence that a risk assessment has been done with relevant steps in place
- Advise Occupational Health and Wellbeing Managers (Routes) of high risk cases
- Open a case file with HR Direct for continued case management

Health & Wellbeing – Stress in the workplace
Remember…

Safety is not an absence of risk.

Instead, safety is matching the level of risk to personal wellbeing.

The Council of Quality and Leadership, USA

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