

# Assessing the risk of stress in the workplace

*New Standard*



**Stress can be a symptom of an underlying health condition and can potentially put employees at risk of mental ill health or lead to accidents at work.**

Stress needs to be risk assessed in the same way as all other biological and physical hazards found in the workplace.

The stress risk assessment described in this standard aims to protect as far as reasonably possible, the health and safety of employees in the workplace and helps to achieve compliance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

The implementation of this business process supports the risk assessment of work, and implementation of controls, to mitigate the risk of poor health and wellbeing.

This standard and process is based on work related stress, and does not look at the implications of personal stress.

# What are the key points?

- Referrals to the occupational health service provider should be completed within two working weeks of the stress risk assessment
- If an employee does not agree to a stress risk assessment, they should be offered the option of inviting a colleague or trade union representative to the meeting for support, or for an alternative line manager to complete the assessment.
- If an assessment shows a moderate to high risk the report included within the assessment should be completed – only noting the workplace pressure that scored the highest, and shared with the employees occupational health and wellbeing manager

Ref:	NR/L2/0H/ST/EC
Date:	06 June 2016
Compliance date:	03 September 2016

**Level 2**

**Assessing risk of stress in the workplace**

**Endorsement and Authorisation**

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# What are the key points?

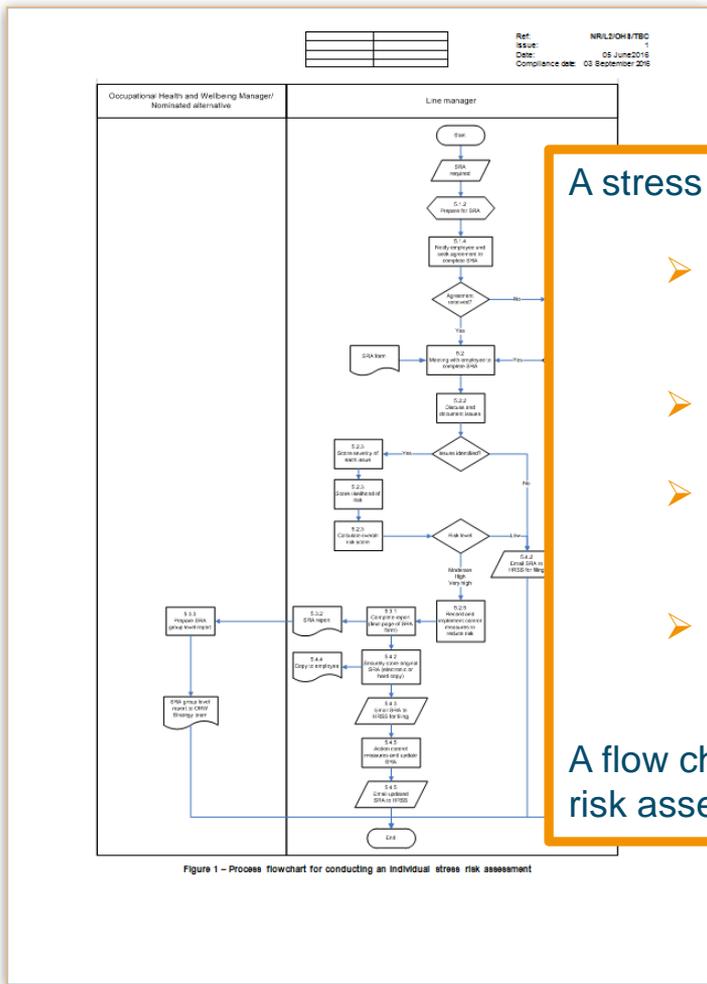


Figure 1 – Process flowchart for conducting an individual stress risk assessment

A stress risk assessment should be completed if;

- The line manager suspects a team member is under excessive workplace pressure
- If they have noticed a change in behaviour
- If an employee says that they are being affected by pressure or stress due to work
- As part of a return-to-work process following a stress related absence

A flow chart is included to show the process for conducting a stress risk assessment

# What are the key points?

Ref:	NR/L2/OHS/TBC
Issue:	1
Date:	05 June 2016
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## Appendix B – Potential risk table

Likelihood: Will it happen or not?	Potential severity of stress or harm				
	Insignificant 1	Minor 2	Moderate 3	Severe 4	Extrem 5
Almost certain 5	5	10	15	20	25
Likely 4	4	8	12	16	20
Possible 3	3	6	9	12	15
Unlikely 2	2	4	6	8	10
Remote 1	1	2	3	4	5

Table 4 - Risk score table

The assessment considers the six potential causes of workplace pressure;

- Control
- Job security and change
- Balanced workload
- Job conditions
- Resources and communication
- Work relationships

These are discussed during the assessment using prompts to help identify causes of stress.

The potential risk of the causes is then measured against a stress risk table measuring severity and Likelihood to determine how severe the risk this is.

# ***What is the purpose of the standard?***

- To prevent putting employees at risk, recognising that stress can be a symptom of a health condition and dealing with this early can help to prevent further health issues or accidents in the workplace
- To support line managers when managing a colleague with stress
- To be compliant with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- To improve the health and wellbeing of our colleagues

# Further support

For further information and support visit the Health & Wellbeing portal:

<https://safety.networkrail.co.uk/healthandwellbeing/>

To refer a colleague following the completion of a stress risk assessment, contact OH Assist:

Ring the OH Assist helpdesk on **0845 608 0656**

Visit the OH Assist website for more information - [www.networkrail.ohassist.com](http://www.networkrail.ohassist.com)