

# Mental Health Risk Assessment



## Five steps to creating a company-wide stress risk assessment

## Why do businesses need a stress risk assessment?

Today, many of the UK's businesses are facing absenteeism, presenteeism, reduced productivity and high staff turnover due to mental health issues. In 2022/23, an estimated 875,000 workers in the UK were suffering from work-related stress, depression, or anxiety, resulting in 17.1 million working days lost\*.

As all employers have a duty of care obligation to look after the health and safety of staff, including their wellbeing, a stress risk assessment is vital. As such, we've designed this guide to help you create an effective stress risk assessment for your business.

## How to use this guide

As every business is unique, we've created a risk assessment template that you can use as a framework. Simply remove, add, or change points, to customise it for your business.

Our example is for a company-wide stress risk assessment, however you could adapt it for a team or individual.

## Getting started

Here are five steps to creating a company-wide stress risk assessment.

### Step One Identify the stress risk factors in your organisation

You will need to start by making an assessment of the business, team or individual. You can collect information in a range of different ways. If you are assessing an individual, you could ask a series of questions in a one-to-one meeting, as well as check sickness records, or any referrals to occupational health.

For a team or the wider business, you can talk to staff as well as check sources including surveys, sickness data, staff turnover, exit interviews and referrals to occupational health. If you are assessing a team, you may also wish to cross reference your observations against other departments across the organisation.

### Step two Categorise the issues

To create an effective and accessible risk assessment, it is helpful to put your stress risk factors into categories. The HSE Management Standards have already identified six key stress factors in the workplace. These form the basis of our risk assessment template. The factors are:

- 1. Role** – whether people understand their role and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles
- 2. Demands** – including issues such as work patterns, workload, and the work environment
- 3. Control** – how much say the person has in the way they do their work
- 4. Relationships** – this includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour
- 5. Support** – including encouragement, sponsorship and the resources provided by the organisation
- 6. Change** – how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation

We've added example issues into each category to give you an idea of what to consider.

### Step three Decide what actions can be taken

Once you've identified the key issues in your business, you will need to outline actions to overcome them. If you are assessing teams or the wider business, you may wish to do this alongside the senior management and HR team. For an individual, you may wish to work on an action plan together. We have provided some examples in our template.

### Step four Assign responsibility

You can now assign a person to each of the actions you've outlined. You may select a line manager, a team member, HR, your senior management team, or multiple people across your business. Talk to the relevant people about their responsibilities and agree deadlines for implementation.

### Step five Monitor and review your risk assessment

We recommend that you review your risk assessment on a regular basis, to ensure it's working effectively. Over time, you may find that you'll need to make changes, add new issues and remove others.

\* [hse.gov.uk/statistics/assets/docs/hssh2223.pdf](https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/assets/docs/hssh2223.pdf)

# Example mental health risk assessment form

<b>Subject of risk assessment: Business/team/individual</b>

<b>No of employees:</b>

<b>Reason for this risk assessment:</b>



## RISK FACTORS TO CONSIDER:

### ROLE Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles

Action point no.	Issues identified, e.g.	Proposed control measures/action required, e.g.	Person responsible	Date completed DD/MM/YY
1	Job role not clear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure employees have a job description that clearly defines their role within the team and organisation</li> </ul>		
2	Lack of clarity over line management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure reporting lines are outlined</li> <li>Provide a clear company structure/hierarchy</li> </ul>		
3	A culture that views stress as a sign of weakness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approachable management team</li> <li>Ensure open communication between staff and managers</li> <li>Consider qualified mental health first aid trained staff on the ground</li> </ul>		
4	Lack of communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate clear business objectives to team</li> <li>Ensure close employee involvement during times of change</li> <li>Regular team/company meetings</li> </ul>		
5	Overlapping of work with staff in other teams/ departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure outputs of each department is clear</li> <li>Encourage communication between departments/ teams</li> </ul>		
6	A culture of long hours, or taking work home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead by example and avoid working excessively long hours</li> <li>Check staff are suitably qualified/trained for role</li> <li>Schedule work effectively</li> </ul>		

**DEMANDS** Including issues such as workload, work patterns and the work environment

Action point no.	Issues identified, e.g.	Proposed control measures/action required e.g.	Person responsible	Date completed DD/MM/YY
1	Excessive workload/long hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Help staff prioritise tasks</li> <li>▪ Re-allocation of work (temporarily or permanently)</li> <li>▪ Limit email/text/phone communication outside of hours</li> <li>▪ Ensure leave is taken</li> </ul>		
2	Staff not properly qualified for role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure staff are not under-qualified or overqualified for their role</li> <li>▪ Provide additional training, e.g. time management, assertiveness</li> <li>▪ Schedule regular career planning discussions</li> </ul>		
3	Repetitive or unfulfilling work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider job rotation</li> <li>▪ Increase scope of role or variety of tasks</li> <li>▪ Give staff more autonomy over role</li> </ul>		
4	Inadequate resources to meet tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Analyse what is required for large projects/tasks (staff, deadlines, equipment etc)</li> </ul>		
5	Issues with physical working environment (temperature, light, ventilation etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Make physical adjustments where necessary - enable staff to adjust lighting, temperature, ventilation</li> <li>▪ Ensure hazards are controlled</li> <li>▪ Encourage rest/lunch breaks</li> </ul>		
6	Problems with psychological working environment (verbal abuse, threat of violence, poor management etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage all staff to report issues to manager</li> <li>▪ Fully investigate complaints</li> <li>▪ Keep track of absence levels, and compare across departments</li> </ul>		

**DEMANDS** How much control staff have in the way they do their work

Action point no.	Issues identified, e.g.	Proposed control measures/action required e.g.	Person responsible	Date completed DD/MM/YY
1	Inability of staff to maintain work/life balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure staff take holiday entitlement</li> <li>▪ Set a protocol that ensures staff have time free from work communications</li> <li>▪ Encourage managers to lead by example</li> </ul>		
2	Rigid work patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider varying working conditions (e.g. flexible working, compressed hours, working from home)</li> <li>▪ Prioritise tasks and outline deadlines</li> </ul>		
3	Lack of opportunity for staff to develop skills/use initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure staff have variety in their roles</li> <li>▪ Encourage open conversation between management and staff</li> <li>▪ Provide training to promote personal development</li> </ul>		

**RELATIONSHIPS** Including issues such as workload, work patterns and the work environment

Action point no.	Issues identified, e.g.	Proposed control measures/action required e.g.	Person responsible	Date completed DD/MM/YY
1	Low morale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote a positive culture of trust</li> <li>▪ Find ways to celebrate success (rewards, bonus, staff lunches etc)</li> <li>▪ Ensure staff know how to praise staff</li> </ul>		
2	Staff feel bullied, harassed or excluded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Write a Bullying &amp; Harassment policy and communicate to all teams</li> <li>▪ Consider diversity and equality training</li> </ul>		
3	Lack of support, or fear about raising issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage positive and constructive conversation at all levels</li> <li>▪ Create a procedure for staff to raise issues</li> <li>▪ Investigate all issues and take appropriate action as soon as possible</li> </ul>		
4	Poor relationships/ongoing grievances between team members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Discuss problems openly with individuals at an early stage</li> <li>▪ Check skills of management</li> <li>▪ Refer to existing company policies such as grievance or complaint procedures</li> </ul>		

**SUPPORT** Including the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues

Action point no.		Proposed control measures/action required e.g.	Person responsible	Date completed DD/MM/YY
1	Staff feel unable to raise issues/concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure positive and open communication between all staff</li> <li>▪ Implement and monitor existing policies and procedures in your business</li> </ul>		
2	Staff feel unsupported in the workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Make staff aware of support available within the organisation e.g. line manager, mentors</li> <li>▪ Raise awareness of support outside of the business (e.g. Mental Health First Aiders, counselling, occupational health, Health and Safety Officer)</li> </ul>		
3	Lack of support for those with disabilities or mental ill health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Seek advice from HR, Occupational Health, Health &amp; Safety Officer</li> <li>▪ Support/inductions for those returning to work after long absence</li> </ul>		
4	Staff feel undervalued, or not praised for work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure managers and leaders have training on how to provide recognition</li> <li>▪ Praise staff and reward success</li> </ul>		



**CHANGE** How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation

Action point no.		Proposed control measures/action required e.g.	Person responsible	Date completed DD/MM/YY
1	Staff feel unsure about changes happening in the department/business - and how they may be affected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure good communication throughout period of change</li> <li>▪ Consult with staff at an early stage of transition, explaining what will happen and when</li> <li>▪ Ensure staff have the opportunity to raise concerns/ views</li> <li>▪ Monitor absences/changes in behaviour</li> <li>▪ Take into consideration presenteeism and how you can identify it</li> </ul>		
2	Staff feel under-supported during the transition period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure staff have appropriate training or support during times of change</li> <li>▪ Allocate a team member that all staff can approach throughout the change period</li> <li>▪ Ongoing communication between management and wider team</li> </ul>		
3	Staff have inexperience/fear of new technology/IT systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide any necessary training for staff before the change period</li> <li>▪ Ensure a manager/experienced team member is available to offer support throughout</li> </ul>		

**DECLARATION**

**Signature:**

**Date:**