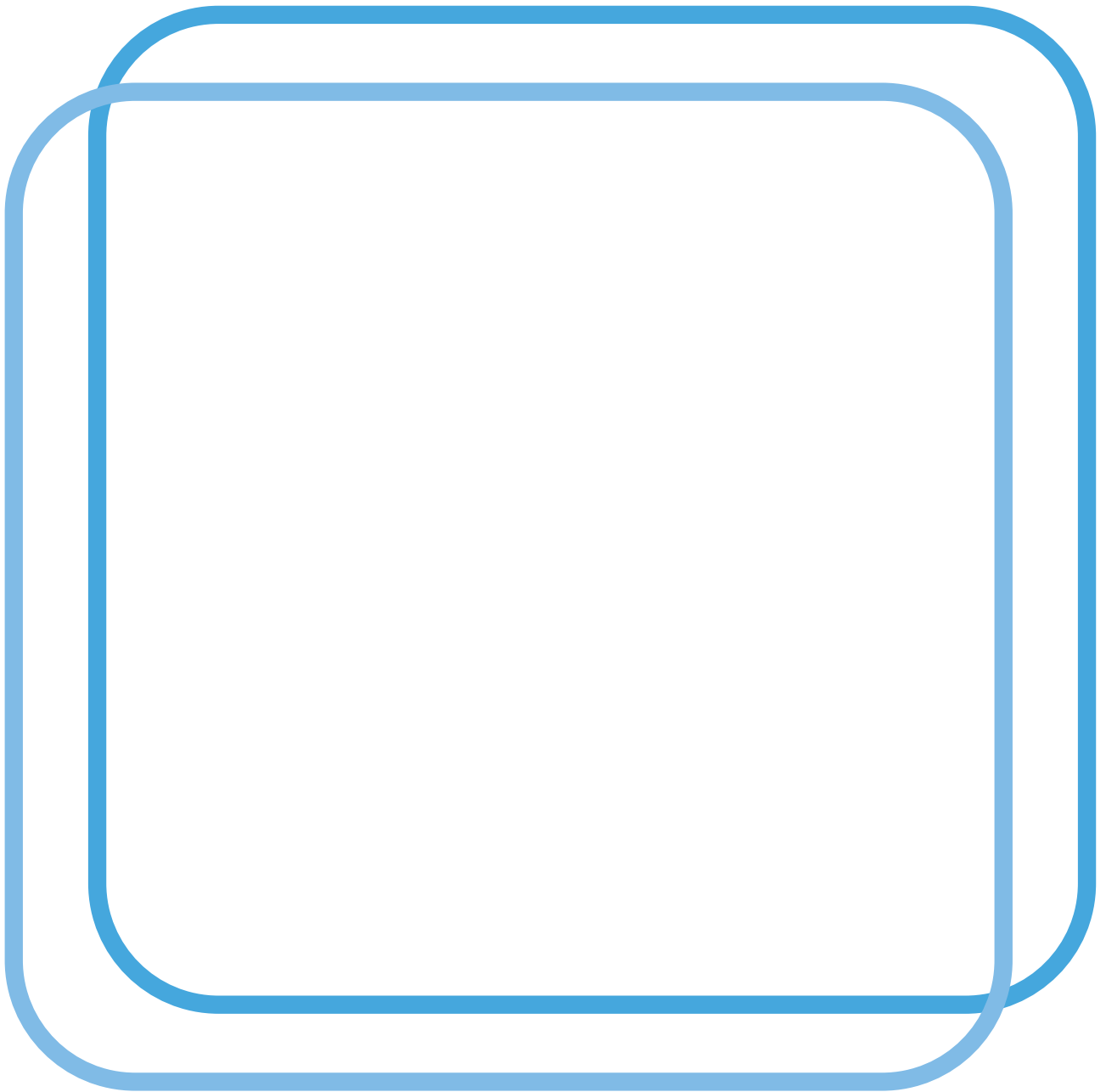


# Stress



# Work Related Stress



Safer Business - Better Health

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## Introduction

### Why should I look at Work Related Stress?

There is a difference between stress and pressure. The HSE's definition of stress is "the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them."

- Surveys indicate that stress and related conditions form the second most commonly reported group of work-related ill-health conditions after musculoskeletal disorders.
- The 2005/06 survey of self-reported work-related illness estimated that around 420,000 individuals in Britain believe that they were experiencing work-related stress at a level that was making them ill.

- The annual incidence of work-related mental health problems in Britain in 2005 is estimated as approximately 6,400 new cases per year.
- The same survey of self-reported work-related illness estimated that 195,000 people first became aware of work-related stress, depression or anxiety in the previous 12 months.
- Also from the same survey it is estimated that self-reported work-related stress, depression or anxiety account for an estimated 10.5 million reported lost working days per year in Britain.

### What does the law say?

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 states that employers have duties under the above act to ensure the health and safety of employees and anyone who may be affected by their work. This includes the need to control stress.

There is also a specific duty on employers under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations to undertake risk assessments which seek to identify and eliminate or reduce risks to their employees' health, safety and welfare. Stress falls firmly into this category of risks to health, safety and welfare.

## What does the law say? (cont'd)

(cont'd)

To aid businesses to assess excessive pressure the HSE have produced the Stress Management Standards.

### **The Standards cover six key areas of work.**

These are:

**Demands** - such as work load, work patterns and the work environment.

**Control** - such as how much say the person has in the way they do their work.

**Support** - such as the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the

organisation, line management and colleagues.

**Relationships** - such as promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.

**Role** - such as whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles.

**Change** - such as how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.

## What do I need to do?

### **How do I assess performance against the Standards?**

- Use existing information to see how your organisation shapes up. Sickness, absence or staff turnover data could help, as could any surveys you have undertaken to get the views of employees.
- Use the survey questionnaire that HSE has developed to give an indication of performance against the Standards.
- Look at the Management Standards website: [www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards](http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards) for more information.
- Regularly review the assessment

### **What if I do not want to use the surveys?**

- Go straight into discussion with employees.
- Outline the importance of tackling stress and discuss the statements in the Standards with a representative sample of your employees.
- Ensure employees are able to express their honest opinions, e.g. consider involving someone else in the process so that employees are not afraid to say what they think.
- Record what employees say, which will help you prioritise and give you a record to check back on in the future.
- Continue to use existing methods to talk to employees about issues that affect them at work, e.g., regular staff meetings, discussions whilst carrying out daily duties or at performance reviews.
- Look at HSE's guidance book, tackling work related stress.

# Checklist for stress

This checklist has been designed as an aid to help you consider stress in the workplace and it should be used in conjunction with the general risk assessment sheet to help identify possible hazards.

Name of business:	
Nature of business:	
Address:	
Name of person completing:	Date:

		Yes	No
1	Is stress a problem in your work place?		
2	Do you keep accurate date on sickness absence?		
3	Do you analyse the sickness data to determine causes of absence?		
4	Have you identified any patterns of absence?		
5	Do you carry out return to work interviews if certain trigger points are met?		
6	Do you have a stress policy?		
7	If yes to above, is it due for review?		
8	Have you completed a stress based risk assessment?		
9	Do you talk to your staff about any stress they may be feeling?		
10	If a member of staff approaches you with a stress related problem do you: a, Take the time to talk to them? b, Encourage them to talk through their problems? c, Listen to them without judgment? d, Make them feel better about a stressful and emotional situation?		
11	If stress is a problem have you considered possible solutions?		
12	Do you raise awareness of stress in the work place by utilising a staff notice board or other means of communication?		

## Note

This checklist has been produced to start you thinking of what hazards/controls you have at the premise. This list is not exhaustive and there maybe hazards/controls that have not been covered.