

**DERBYSHIRE LA**

**MANAGEMENT OF  
STRESS**



**The Village Federation  
of Carsington & Hopton and  
Kirk Ireton Primary Schools**



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# **1. INTRODUCTION**

## **i) The Legal Background:-**

Employers have a legal duty under Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees. This duty includes seeking to protect employees from undue stress at work.

Nationally, the incidence of stress related illness at work is increasing. The financial costs of stress related illness to employers and personal implications for individuals is significant and should not be underestimated. There are, therefore, significant cost benefits for all concerned if stress is effectively managed. The Health and Safety Executive has issued new guidance and this Document is the LEA's Guidance and Advice to Governing Bodies, Headteachers, other Senior Managers and Teachers in Schools. It is based on that from the Health and Safety Executive. It includes a Management of Stress Policy.

## **ii) Statutory Provisions**

Managers have a general duty for the health and safety of employees for whom they are responsible. This duty includes dealing with stress related issues and taking appropriate action.

It is also important that managers are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of stress in employees and take appropriate action.

Employees have a duty under Section (7) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Regulation 12 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by acts or omissions at work. This includes mental hazards such as workplace stress as well as physical hazards.

## **iii) Case Law**

Liabilities at law will arise where an employer does not demonstrate reasonable care towards an employee and it is reasonably foreseeable to the employer that injury will (and does) result as a consequence. 'Injury' can be interpreted as either mental or physical. Stress is not an injury in itself but a mental illness (such as a nervous breakdown) arising out of stress can be.

## **Walker v Northumberland County Council**

In this highly publicised case, Mr Walker was a social worker who suffered a nervous breakdown in 1986. It was accepted that his troubles were caused by problems at work due to increased workload. When Mr Walker returned to work, he was assured that he would receive assistance with his current workload and the backlog which had accumulated during his lengthy absence; but this assistance was intermittent and short-lived (one month). Mr Walker suffered a second breakdown and was retired on the grounds of ill-health.

The critical issue was that the employer knew about and accepted that the ill-health absence was due to work related stress, but then allowed the situation to continue and this precipitated a second breakdown.

### **Settlements Out of Court**

There have been a number of highly publicised cases of stress claims submitted by teachers which have subsequently been settled out of court with no formal judgement in law. These specific examples are a senior teacher from a secondary school who received £47,000, a primary school class teacher who received £254,000 and a teacher who worked with disturbed children received £300,000.

Although each case is determined on its own merits the key issues in each of these settlements were:

- The employers negligence exposed the employee to 'a foreseeable risk of injury'.
- Risk assessments were not carried out or recommendations were not implemented where it was practicable to do so.
- Representations made by employees were ignored by senior managers and employers.
- Appropriate professional or medical support was not identified or accessed

### **iv) Management of Stress**

It is therefore important that Governing Bodies, as employers, have a policy for stress management, which is implemented, monitored and evaluated on a regular basis.

The attached policy is based on the County Council's own policy for its employees and is recommended to Governing Bodies for adoption.

In the context of schools the LEA has a responsibility to ensure that Governing Bodies fulfil the duty to protect employees from undue stress.

The LEA expects every Governing Body to adopt a Management of Stress Policy, either the LEA's or an alternative, and monitor its effectiveness.

Situations where stress is not effectively managed may lead to claims for compensation. When a claim is made the LEA will need to be confident that all reasonable steps were taken to avoid undue stress if the claim is to be successfully challenged. **If a Governing Body has been negligent in managing stress the Authority will consider whether to charge the cost of any compensation to the school's budget.**

## **2. POLICY STATEMENT**

### **DERBYSHIRE LA THE VILLAGE FEDERATION MANAGEMENT OF STRESS**

#### **Introduction**

The Governing Body is committed to promoting the good health of its employees which it sees as its most valuable asset.

The Governing Body recognises that stress is a problem which could potentially affect all employees. It is committed to managing stress in the workplace.

#### **Generic Stress Risk Assessment**

The Governing Body recognises that excessive stress at work may affect any of its employees, undertaking any role at any time, anywhere within the School.

The implementation of good management practices and the Governing Body's Management of Stress Policy and its associated control strategies are intended to reduce the exposure to, and effects of, excessive stress in the school. Stress should be reduced to acceptable levels wherever reasonably practicable.

#### **Policy**

To reduce the risk to health and safety of its employees from undue stress at work to the lowest reasonable and practicable level, the Governing Body agrees to:-

- Monitor levels of work related stress in the School and carry out a stress assessment of any employee who has been identified as suffering from excessive stress at work.

- Develop safe systems of work and introduce practical preventative measures where unacceptable risks of undue stress are identified.
- Provide appropriate training for managers to help them recognise the symptoms of stress and give practical guidance on the measures that may be taken to assist individuals suffering from potentially stress related symptoms.
- Provide information to all employees and training where appropriate to enable them to recognise the symptoms of stress and the appropriate measures that may be adopted.
- Provide appropriate support or guidance to any employees who suffer through undue stress at work.
- Monitor and evaluate absence levels due to stress related illness.
- Evaluate and review the effectiveness of the Policy and procedures as required.

### **Implementation**

The Headteacher shall have responsibility for ensuring that all employees are made aware of the procedures laid out in this Policy.

Trade Union and Professional Association representatives, will be provided with relevant information concerning this Policy.

Through the control measures identified in the Managers' and Employees' Guidelines, the Governing Body will monitor the workforce for indicators of excessive stress at work and take all reasonable steps to reduce exposure to the identified causes of stress.

### **Monitoring**

The Governing Body will be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the Policy and its implementation.

### **3. HEADTEACHER'S AND LINE MANAGERS' GUIDELINES**

#### **1 Introduction**

In its policy statement, the Governing Body stated its commitment to reducing the risk to the Health and Safety of its employees from stress at work.

Much of the implementation of that commitment will fall to the Headteacher and other Line Managers as part of their day to day line management responsibilities.

These guidelines are intended to assist you in your responsibilities in that process.

#### **2 Your Role**

As a manager you have a responsibility for the health and safety of employees who you manage as well as yourself. When identifying the hazards employees face you should also consider the effects of stress and take appropriate action to monitor and reduce this as far as is reasonably practicable by:-

- i) Assessing employees and their work in relation to stress, just as you assess any other potential hazard.
- ii) taking all reasonable measures to reduce the risks from stress.
- iii) being supportive and encouraging.

When dealing with stress in the workplace you must consider your legal responsibilities and bear in mind other policies and procedures agreed by the Governing Body of which may be helpful when you are seeking solutions to problems.

These are outlined in Section 8 'Legal Requirements, Policies and Procedures'.

#### **3 What is Stress?**

The Health and Safety Executive defines stress as:

**“the reaction that people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them. It arises when they worry that they can't cope”.**

A distinction should be made between pressures or challenges which can be stimulating and stress which is the reaction to too much pressure. The motivation to achieve challenging goals can test an individual's skill and resourcefulness in a stimulating and positive way. But when an individual, team, or workforce perceives the demands on their skill and abilities are greater

than the professional and personal skills which they have, then stress may result.

In physiological terms, stress is a condition where the amount of physical and mental energy used by the body to cope with pressures is greater than the body's ability to restore that energy.

The physical and behavioural effects of stress are a natural result of excessive pressures or demands. These are usually short-lived and cause no lasting harm. When the pressures recede, there is a quick return to normal. Stress is a part of everyday life and is only a problem when it is excessive and prolonged.

#### **4 The Effects of Stress**

##### ***Instant Response (Fight or Flight)***

This is the reaction to a situation which enables individuals to take appropriate action; sometimes known as the fight or flight response. Within the body many activities are increased. The heart beats faster, muscles tense, and extra cholesterol and sugar are found in the blood. Other activities such as digestion and immune responses slows. Therefore, energy is diverted to systems which we need to maximise our efforts.

This response is a reaction to short term crisis and is not intended to be prolonged. The solution is to get rid of these built up energies on a regular basis, letting the body recover and return to normal, and therefore prevent long term health problems.

Different people perceive different events as stressful. Therefore stress may be experienced as a result of exposure to a wide range of work demands and in turn contribute to an equally wide range of health issues.

## **5 How is Stress Recognised in an Individual?**

The effects of prolonged stress may be caused by events in an individual's personal life, work life, or from a combination of these. These effects may affect an individual in a physical, emotional, and behavioural way. Although not an exhaustive list some examples of these are:-

### **i) Physical Signs**

- Shoulders, neck and back pain
- General muscle tension, eg sufferers sit in one position and clench muscles
- Cramps, skin rashes
- Palpitations
- Chest pain
- Breathing difficulties (hyperventilation)
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Visual disturbance
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Unexpected weight loss or gain

### **ii) Emotional signs**

- Intolerance and irritability
- Withdrawal from social contact
- Not taking the lead in work projects
- Tearful response to minor issues
- Loss of libido (sex drive)
- Sleep disturbance and nightmares (often an early sign of stress is difficulty getting to sleep and early morning waking)
- Low self-esteem
- Guilt
- Panic
- Mood swings
- Worrying inappropriately

### iii) Behavioural signs

- Smoking – increased or begin after successfully stopping
- Alcohol - stopping for drinks on the way home to wind down or drinking to cope
- Nail-biting
- Changes in eating habits - eating more or not at all, developing food cravings
- Evading deadlines - tends to interact with absenteeism
- Making excuses
- Daydreaming and lack of concentration
- Indecision
- Complaining unreasonably
- Lying or cheating to 'cover up'
- Absenteeism with poor excuses
- Erratic mood changes
- Avoidance of essential action
- Apathy

It is not suggested that every symptom will be seen in everyone with stress problems, nor that every time someone has these symptoms they have a stress related illness.

Generally the best way for you to be aware of their stress is to understand an employee's normal performance levels and general demeanour and behaviour at work. Where there is a change in any of these behavioural patterns it could be a sign that the employee is starting to feel the effects of stress.

No one expects managers or colleagues to act as doctors but it is helpful to be able to recognise changes in performance and ability, particularly as family or colleagues are likely to be the first people to notice these changes.

No two people react to events in the same way so pinpointing the causes of stress can take time. Any change to usual routines can cause stress. It is often not the situation but their reaction to it which makes an individual feel stressed. Also, what is stressful to one person may be stimulating to another and individuals vary in their reaction over time; some days it is easier to cope than others.

## **6 How can Workplace Stress be Identified?**

Stress may be recognised in one of four ways or by considering some elements of all four:-

### **i) Personal Discussion**

The first way to discover whether an employee has problems is to ask them. This is most likely to be through informal conversation. Alternatively it may arise as part of performance management for teachers or any management supervision processes for non teaching employees which are already in place.

### **ii) Sickness Absence Analysis**

The second way of recognising stress is by analysis of sickness absence returns. Formal analysis will already happen as part of the Governing Body's agreed Absence Control Management Guidelines. You should also consider as a part of that process whether or not stress may be a factor.

You should consider:-

- a) individual problems - where there may be increased rates of either short or long term absences; or possible stress related diagnosis.
- b) whether there may be group problems - where there are numbers of employees with increased sickness absence rates or with possible stress related diagnoses.
- c) looking at medical certificates for stress as a specific reason for absence. If this is the case, you will need to ascertain as part of the return to work interview whether or not this is work-related.

The return to work interview is the most useful time to discuss any of the above and make decisions on any further action.

### **iii) Informal Monitoring**

The basis of this approach is knowing the members of your own team, their individual skills, moods, personalities and how they respond to pressures and demands. You should then be aware of any difficulties that arise. You may be able to talk about these difficulties (if they have not approached you first) to try to provide support and assistance.

### **iv) Stress Questionnaire**

You may wish to carry out an individual stress assessment. The questionnaire is included as Section 7 'Stress Questionnaire'.

Alternatively you may request the Authority's Employee Welfare Officer to do this. This **confidential** service is available through the school's School Support

Division Personnel Officer at the Centre for School Improvement, John Hadfield House. Telephone 01629 580000 ext. 2941.

Schools which have bought the LEA's Comprehensive Personnel Service will automatically have access to this service. Other schools can purchase this service separately.

A specimen letter to the employee is included as Section 6 'Specimen Letter to Employee to arrange a Stress Assessment'.

Section 5 of these guidelines is a 'Management of Stress Flowchart' which details the steps involved in identifying and resolving workplace stress. Within this process it is your responsibility to review the situation at regular intervals and at least at each performance management or supervision session.

**It is important that a record of any analysis or discussion is made and kept for future reference. This applies regardless of the circumstances or outcome.**

## **7 Factors Which Cause and Changes Which May Reduce Stress in the Workplace**

There are many factors which could cause workplace stress. A combination of these factors may have a greater effect than individual factors. Some causes may affect individual employees and others may affect a number or group of employees.

It may be possible to prevent or reduce workplace stress by considering organisational factors such as:

- Encourage a culture of stress awareness/openness
- task redesign
- reorganised work schedules and physical environment
- employee development
- participation in decision making
- clarification of role
- feedback on performance
- peer support and team building.

The causes of workplace stress and actions to alleviate them must always be considered and discussed with the employee concerned.

Although not an exhaustive list the following are the most common:

**i) Factors Relating to the Job.**

- ***job content:***  
if difficulties are caused by any aspect of the job, provide appropriate guidance, training and support.
- ***long hours/shiftwork:***  
consider any legal requirements in relation to VDU workers, working time directive  
alternative shift or working patterns and rotas  
ensure appropriate breaks are taken  
ensure annual leave is taken at regular intervals.
- ***use of technology:***  
ensure appropriate information and consultation under local agreements prior to any new installations, ensure prompt appropriate training, with follow up for updated versions.
- ***anxiety owing to danger of injury or infection:***  
provide sufficient information and/or training regarding risk factors, appropriate work practices and use of personal protective equipment.
- ***workload:***  
examine the organisation and distribution of work
- ***repetitive tasks:***  
consider job rotation; between individuals consider alternative working methods/technology.
- ***multiplicity of tasks:***
- ***challenging behaviour:***  
ensure appropriate training; with prompt sympathetic action in emergency situations.

- **use of machinery:**  
ensure regular maintenance, effective operation, and that it is suitable for its intended purpose.
- ***changes in responsibility/curriculum/working practices***  
ensure appropriate briefing, training and support.
- ***OFSTED Inspection:***  
ensure all staff are well briefed, trained and receive appropriate support.

## ii) **Factors Relating to the Environment**

- ***noise:***  
consider whether it is 'nuisance noise' or whether a formal assessment is required in relation to the Noise at Work Regulations.
- ***temperature/ventilation:***  
if there are any problems with temperature and/or ventilation, look first at simple methods, such as opening windows, use of desk fans, warm clothing.
- ***lighting:***  
consider any recommendations for specific tasks such as VDU work, otherwise ensure adequate illumination levels for the type of work being undertaken.
- ***space:***  
consider the layout of the working area, ensure adequate storage space and adequate personal space.
- ***ergonomic design:***  
ensure there is a minimum amount of fatigue associated with the work being undertaken.

## iii) **factors relating to the organisation culture**

- ***involvement in decision making:***  
Employees work best in a culture where they are involved in the decision making process.  
where the management style is confident, consistent, caring, competent and communicative, where they have responsibility for their work, control over work content and where effective performance is recognised and valued.
- ***excessive administration:***  
administrative tasks which may detract from the main job purpose, should be reduced to a minimum. Administrative systems and processes should be as efficient and effective as practicable.

- ***over emphasis on targets and objectives:***  
whilst these are an effective management tool in a successful organisation too many or where they are unachievable will reduce effective performance. This may lead to stress.

**iv) factors relating to employee development:**

- ***training needs:***  
these need to be assessed on a regular basis.
- ***job security:***  
where possible changes are to be considered, keep employees informed on a regular basis.

**v) Other Factors**

- ***verbal or physical abuse:***  
provide immediate support as appropriate.
- ***harassment or bullying:***  
refer to the Governing Body's agreed procedure for dealing with these cases.
- ***home/work interface:***  
fatigue - causes may be severe physical effort, night/shift work, intense concentration, or interaction with personal/home difficulties. This may be particularly so for vulnerable groups.
- ***relationships with colleagues:***  
identify source of the problem and take appropriate action.
- ***vulnerable groups (young/older/pregnant employees):***  
Mental and physical fatigue during pregnancy require specific consideration when carrying out a pregnant employee's risk assessment. You should refer to the Management of Health and Safety at Work (Amendment) Regulations 1999.

With some of these issues, you may feel you need further assistance. A list of those able to provide help and advice is given in Part 10 of this Section.

## **8 How can I Help with an Individual's Problems?**

Pressures or stress factors may arise outside the workplace. Employers do not have a legal duty to prevent ill-health due to stress arising from circumstances outside work. You should, however, appreciate that external pressures, including domestic circumstances, may make employees more vulnerable to stress at work as well as affecting their performance and judgement. Any

assistance you can offer may lessen the impact.

Some other professional help may be required, but as a manager, you can take some basic steps which may go a long way to helping your employees.

- Please remember that **personal conversations must be kept in strict confidence**, with information being given to others, only with the employees consent.
- Ensure that you make time for members of your team when you can listen without being interrupted.
- Be supportive, sympathetic and open.
- Use policies already in place to assist with time off.
- Be prepared to consider changes to work patterns.
- Where you feel further help is required, you may wish to discuss this with your Headteacher, Chair of Governors, or other appropriate person/organisation listed in Part 10 of this Section.
- You may wish to direct the employee to their Trade Union or Professional Association for support and advice.
- Suggest the employee contacts **Teacherline**.

## **9 Resolving Issues**

### **i) By Yourself:**

Many issues related to workplace stress will be straightforward with a solution easily reached in discussions between you and the employee.

For example:

- if tasks are repetitive, introduce job rotation if possible;
- if there are difficulties with use of technology, ensure training and support is made available;
- during periods of change provide training and support;

**If significant changes to working arrangements or patterns are proposed, the actions should be documented with agreed review dates.**

## **ii) By Referral to Other Specialist Help:**

Where you and the employee are unable to resolve the issue and/or where you feel specialist help or advice is needed.

A list of those organisations able to provide help and advice is given in Part 10 of this Section.

The Authority's Employee Welfare Service, which provides **confidential** employee counselling, and Occupational Health Physician, who provides medical advice, are able to support employees **in confidence**. This Service is available through the School's School Support Division Personnel Support Officer at the Centre for School Improvement, John Hadfield House. Telephone: 01629 580000.

Schools which have bought the LEA's Comprehensive Personnel Service will automatically have access to this service. Other schools can purchase this service separately.

Employees may also be referred to alternative independent welfare or counselling services, NHS or private medical services, for which the school or the employee may be charged.

When specialist advice and support is requested, you should ensure any useful background information or risk assessments which have already been carried out are available.

Teachers can ring **Teacherline**. This is a **free confidential 24-hour** telephone counselling support and advice service available to all teachers.

**The number to call is 08000 562 561.**

Details of **Teacherline** are included as Section 8 of this Document.

## **10 Who can Advise Me?**

The first point of contact in most instances will be your Headteacher or Chair of Governors.

The LEA also provides a **confidential** support service which is available through the School's School Support Division Personnel Officer at The Centre for School Improvement, John Hadfield House. Telephone: 01629 580000. Schools which have bought the LEA's Comprehensive Personnel Service will automatically have access to advice. Other schools can purchase this service separately.

There are many external bodies both statutory and voluntary which can offer assistance with individual problems.

## **11 Training**

The Governing Body will ensure training will be provided in the recognition of stress, its management and the use of these Guidelines.

This training can be provided through the LEA or from alternative independent trainers.

## **12 Who can Help with my Stress?**

You are not only a manager but also an employee too, possibly with your own set of work and personal problems. It is difficult for you to support others if you are not prepared to look for support and help for yourself when it is required.

If you are having difficulties discuss these initially with your Headteacher, or Line Manager, to try to resolve them. If your problem is with your Headteacher or Line Manager, discuss it with the Chair of Governors or your Headteacher respectively or with your Trade Union or Professional Association representative. You should then seek other appropriate advice and support through the formal and informal support networks set out in Section 4 "Employees Guidelines".

## 4. EMPLOYEES' GUIDELINES

### 1 Introduction

In its policy statement, the Governing Body has stated its commitment to reducing the risk to the Health and Safety of its employees from stress at work.

### 2 Your Role/Responsibility

You or your colleagues may suffer at sometime in your working life from stress at work. It is important that you are able to recognise factors in the workplace which may cause stress. It is also helpful if you recognise the signs and symptoms of stress in yourselves or others around you in order to be able to take positive action.

Legally you have a duty under Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Regulation 12 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 to take reasonable care of your own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by your acts or omissions whilst at work.

If you feel your work is causing undue stress then you should talk to your Headteacher or your line manager who will discuss what actions may be taken to help reduce the source of the problem.

### 3 What is Stress?

Stress is a natural human reaction to excessive pressure; **it is not a disease**. It is only when stress is excessive and goes on for a long time that it may lead to mental or physical ill-health.

A reasonable and acceptable degree of pressure often promotes motivation and stimulation at work leading to job satisfaction. It is only a problem when it is unreasonable and prolonged.

### 4 The Effects of Stress

#### ***Instant Response (Fight or Flight)***

This is the reaction to a situation which enables individuals to take appropriate action; sometimes known as the fight or flight response. Within the body many activities are increased. The heart beats faster, muscles tense, and extra cholesterol and sugar are found in the blood. Other activities such as digestion and immune responses slows. Therefore, energy is diverted to systems which we need to maximise our efforts.

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- Complaining unreasonably
- Lying or cheating to 'cover up'
- Absenteeism with poor excuses
- Erratic mood changes
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- Apathy

It is not suggested that every symptom will be seen in everyone with stress problems nor that every time someone has these symptoms they have a stress related illness.

Generally the best way to identify your own or a colleague's stress is to be aware of normal performance levels, general demeanour and behaviour at work. Where there is a change in any of these behavioural patterns it could be the effects of stress.

No one expects you or your colleagues to act as doctors but it is helpful to be able to recognise changes in performance and ability, particularly as family or colleagues are likely to be the first people to notice these changes which are often not acknowledged by individuals themselves.

No two people react to events in the same way so pinpointing the causes of stress can take time. Any change to usual routines can cause stress. It is often not a particular situation but their reaction to it which makes an individual feel stressed. Also, what is stressful to one person may be stimulating to another and individuals vary in their reaction over time; some days it is easier to cope than others.

## **6 What do I do if I Feel Stressed?**

You should be reassured that there are procedures in place to help your Headteacher or line manager and you to resolve workplace stresses.

If you feel that there are aspects of your work which are causing you to feel excessively stressed you should discuss your concerns with your Headteacher or line manager who will try to help you to resolve the situation.

They may also ask you if you have any problems related to stress, either as part of performance management or management supervision or absence control procedures.

If your problems are related to home or of a personal nature you may also wish to discuss these with your Headteacher or line manager. They may be able to assist with emotional support or practical help such as urgent/domestic leave.

**Your Headteacher or line manager will keep any personal conversations in strict confidence. Information will only be given to others with your consent.**

A list of other sources of help and **confidential** services is given in Part 8 of this Section.

## **7 How can I Reduce the Effects of Stress?**

**The ABC of handling stress.**

On a personal level it is useful to be able to analyse and examine your reactions to stress and to be able to reduce the effects as much as possible.

Your chosen methods of reducing stress are as individual as the causes of it.

Notice what causes you stress and how you react. Understanding what you can cope with will prepare you to take control of the situation.

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>A Awareness</b> | What causes your stress?<br>How do you react?  |
| <b>B Balance</b>   | How much can you cope with?<br>What helps you feel satisfied, successful and secure? |
| <b>C Control</b>   | What helps you feel more in control of your situation?                               |

## Stress Busters

There are many things which can help you take responsibility for improving your situation, to gain short term symptom relief, and to provide long term protection against undue stress :

- Appreciate: The present rather than dwelling on the past.
- Avoid: Things which cause more side effects than the stress such as alcohol, smoking, caffeine, overeating, aggression.
- Be Positive: See the positive side of yourself, and others.
- Physical Activity: Uses up the energy created by the stress response. Helps to restore balance and build fitness.
- Relaxation: This opposes the stress response and helps the re-balancing process.
- Sleeping Well: Adopt regular sleep patterns.
- Communicate: Sharing your concerns helps to clarify your thoughts. This can be with friends, colleagues, managers, Trade Unions/Professional Associations' and other 'Advisers'.
- Develop Good Points: Both in yourself and other people.
- Use Time Well: Use time positively. Have a balance between work and recreation.
- Be Assertive: Stand up for yourself
- Eat Well: The basis for good health which helps you handle the pressures of stress.
- Define Priorities: You can't do everything! Deal with the important satisfying things.
- Friendships: A circle of friends gives you the opportunity to talk and share.
- Emotional Release: Laughing, crying and talking helps release some of the tensions of stress rather than keeping them bottled up.

## 8 Sources of Help

There are a number of people/organisations both internal and external to your school who are able to help you on a confidential basis.

## INTERNAL

- i) Speak to your Headteacher, line manager or colleagues initially. If you consider that it is your Headteacher or line manager who is causing you to be stressed, speak to your Chair of Governors or Headteacher respectively.
- ii) The Authority's Employee Welfare Service, which provides **confidential** employee counselling, and Occupational Health Physician, who provides medical advice, are able to support employees **in confidence**. This Service is available through the School's School Support Division Personnel Support Officer at the Centre for School Improvement, John Hadfield House. Telephone: 01629 580000.

Schools which have bought the LEA's Comprehensive Personnel Service will automatically have access to this service. Other schools can purchase this service separately.

- iii) You may also wish to contact your Trade Union or Professional Association representative for support and advice.

## EXTERNAL

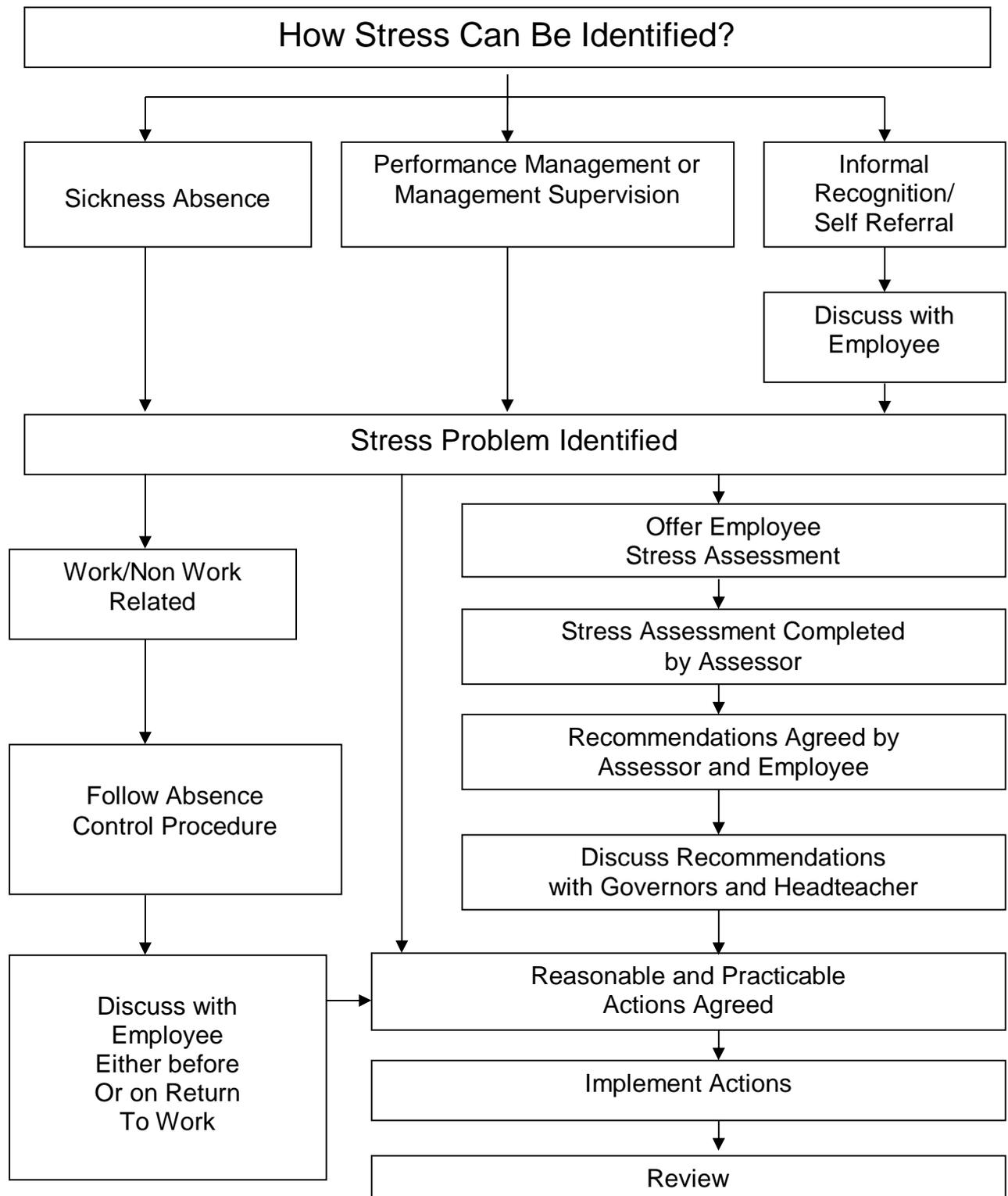
In addition to the statutory agencies such as the Department of Social Security, and the National Health Service (NHS), there are many organisations which provide information, advice and practical help, usually in relation to specific problems: eg Alcoholics Anonymous, Relate. The Authority's Employee Welfare Officer or your Trade Union or Professional Association can provide advice and assistance regarding these.

Teachers can ring **Teacherline**. This is a **free confidential 24-hour** telephone counselling support and advice service available to all teachers.

**The number to call is 08000 562 561.**

Details of **Teacherline** are included as Section 8 of this Document.

## MANAGEMENT OF STRESS – FLOWCHART



**If the employee does not agree to any offer of specific action at any stage this should be recorded and reconsidered at the next review meeting.**

## 6. SPECIMEN LETTER TO EMPLOYEE TO ARRANGE STRESS ASSESSMENT

(To be amended as appropriate)

Letter to Employee From Headteacher  
Or  
From Chair of Governors to Headteacher

Dear

### **Stress Assessment**

I was concerned to hear you feel you are experiencing stress at the present time.

As we agreed at our meeting on [Date], I have asked ***[your line manager / the LEA to contact the Authority's Employee Welfare Service]*** to arrange to see you. They will be able to assess the reasons for the stress you feel at the present time and discuss possible recommendations to reduce the causes. You may, if you wish, find it helpful to be accompanied by a friend or by your trade union representative.

The personal details of the assessment will be kept on a confidential basis with only a general summary of the recommendations being sent to me.

I will arrange to see you again when I have received the summary from ***[your line manager / the Authority's Employee Welfare Service]***.

Yours sincerely

## **7. STRESS QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **Pre-assessment Notes – For Headteachers and Line Managers**

Explain the format of the assessment and include the following points:-

- Discuss the reasons for attendance and the structure of the session.
- Explain that you are acting in an advisory capacity.
- Emphasise that implementation rests with the Headteacher and Governing Body.
- Discuss confidentiality of documents and contents.
- Explain the focus is on stress at work.
- Make the distinction between stress and pressure, as detailed in Section 3 of the Managers' Guidelines.

Ref No.
Date

**Confidential**

**DERBYSHIRE LEA**  
**[NAME OF] SCHOOL**  
**STRESS ASSESSMENT**

**Please ensure the pre-assessment notes have been discussed with the employee before conducting the assessment.**

**Personal Details**

Name: .....  
Job Title: .....  
Line Manager: .....

**Employment History**

.....  
.....  
.....

**Past History**

Have you ever suffered from stress at work that you felt unable to cope with? YES/NO

What caused it, when was it and what were the symptoms?

.....  
.....  
.....

Did you discuss this with anyone? YES/NO  
If yes, with whom?

.....

What was agreed (if appropriate)?

.....  
.....

**Current Situation**

What is currently causing you to feel stressed?

.....  
.....  
.....

What are the symptoms and how long has it been a problem?

.....  
.....  
.....

Have you discussed this with anyone?  
If yes, with whom?

YES/NO

.....

What has been agreed (if appropriate)?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Existing Measures**

What procedures and practices are already in place?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Recommendations**

Detail the proposed remedial measures which could be recommended to THE Headteacher and the Governing Body.

.....  
.....  
.....

Assessor's Signature: ..... Date: .....

Employee's signature: ..... Date: .....

Safety Representative's Signature: ..... Date: .....  
(where applicable)

**Assessors Summary Chart**

Identify the key factors contributing to current stress:-

**Occupational Factors**

1 Job content

YES/NO

- |    |  |        |
|----|--|--------|
| 2  | Long hours/shiftwork   | YES/NO |
| 3  | Use of technology  | YES/NO |
| 4  | Anxiety owing to danger of injury or infection                 | YES/NO |
| 5  | High/low/unpredictable workload                                | YES/NO |
| 6  | Repetitive tasks   | YES/NO |
| 7  | Lone working   | YES/NO |
| 8  | Dealing with challenging behaviour, confrontational situations | YES/NO |
| 9  | Use of machinery   | YES/NO |
| 10 | Changes in responsibility.                                     | YES/NO |

**Environmental Factors**

- |    |                         |        |
|----|-------------------------|--------|
| 11 | Noise                   | YES/NO |
| 12 | Temperature/ventilation | YES/NO |
| 13 | Lighting                | YES/NO |
| 14 | Space                   | YES/NO |
| 15 | Ergonomic design.       | YES/NO |

**Organisational Factors**

- |    |   |        |
|----|---|--------|
| 16 | Little feedback                               | YES/NO |
| 17 | Involvement in decision making                | YES/NO |
| 18 | Management style                              | YES/NO |
| 19 | Lack of autonomy or control over work content | YES/NO |
| 20 | Lack of recognition of job performance        | YES/NO |
| 21 | Inadequate support                            | YES/NO |
| 22 | Training needs                                | YES/NO |
| 23 | Job security.                                 | YES/NO |

**Other Factors**

- |    |   |        |
|----|---|--------|
| 23 | Verbal or physical abuse                    | YES/NO |
| 24 | Sexual or racial harassment                 | YES/NO |
| 25 | Home/work interface - eg fatigue, pregnancy | YES/NO |
| 26 | Relationship with colleagues                | YES/NO |
| 27 | Relationship with line manager              | YES/NO |
| 28 | Circumstances outside of workplace.         | YES/NO |

## 8. **TEACHERLINE – 08000 562 561**

**Teacherline** is the national counselling, support and advice service for teachers. It is a **free confidential 24-hour** telephone counselling service, available every day, for teachers who need support for either work or personal issues. The service is already used extensively by teachers, and has a positive role in the lives of thousands of teachers.

Teacherline is one of the many services made available by **TBF: the teacher support network** which is the national charitable organisation for schoolteachers. TBF has launched a number of new initiatives aimed at supporting teachers in their professional and personal lives. Since successfully launching Teacherline TBF has become a major authority on the pressures within education. It has data and evidence on the issues faced by teachers today, the medical effects of those issues, professional and personal, as well as outcomes and solutions.

Teacherline has been supported widely within the education sector. Funding has been provided by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) and the Teacher Training Agency (TTA). Other partners include teaching unions, employers' organisations, school governors, parent-teacher associations and others. Teacherline has an Advisory Group, comprising these organisations.

### **The main features of Teacherline are:**

- A **free, 24-hour, service**, available every day of the year.
- Staffed by **qualified professional counsellors** (whom meet British Association of Counselling accredited standards) with a **background as teachers** or in education.
- **Confidential** – between the counsellor and the caller.
- **Freephone** 08000 number – creates full **anonymity**.
- Open to all teachers in England and Wales.
- Callers can **use it as often as they need to** – including arranging telephone counselling sessions with the same counsellor if preferred.
- **Independent** – of employers, government or trade unions. Working in partnership with FirstAssist the service is run by TBF, an independent charity for teachers.
- Provides **teacher specific resources**, such as contact details for LEA services, local trade union contacts, community services, voluntary agencies.

- Will direct caller to an appropriate resource or source of ongoing **support**.
- Provides **practical advice** as well as counselling.
- Can **deal with critical situations as well as minor problems** and everything in between.

**TO CONTACT TEACHERLINE – RING 08000 562 561**

## 9. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### i) Legal Requirements:

- Working Time Regulations.

The Working Time Directive came into force on 1 October 1998. When you are looking at the hazards relating to stress and the prevention and reduction of stress, managers should consider working hours and patterns.

- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA)

The DDA defines a “disabled person” as someone with a “physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on an their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”. Also, that a “mental impairment includes an impairment resulting from a clinically well recognised illness”.

Employees who experience temporary and short-term cases of stress related illness will not therefore fall with the scope of the Act. But it is still unclear whether other forms of stress related conditions such as past history of long-term depression may be covered by the Act.

**Managers may need to seek further advice regarding a possible requirement to make ‘reasonable adjustments’.**

### ii) Policies and Procedures:

The policies and procedures agreed by the Governing Body which all employees should consider and be aware of when dealing with stress at work are:-

- Absence Control Management Guidelines

The Governing Body has adopted comprehensive guidelines for absence control and procedures for dealing with cases of long term absence. If an employee appears to be suffering from stress it may begin to affect their attendance at work. Managers should refer to these guidelines for advice on to how to deal with this situation.

- Competence Procedure

The Governing Body's Competence Procedure provides a fair and consistent means of taking corrective action in a situation where an employee's performance does not meet the standard required.

- Procedure for Dealing with Claims of Harassment

It is possible that if an employee appears to be suffering from stress they may be being harassed. The Governing Body's Harassment Policy provides a fair and consistent means for dealing with cases of harassment. Managers should refer to the procedure for guidance when dealing with these situations.

**All employees should be familiar with these procedures. This applies particularly to managers when they are considering what to do or how to advise an employee who may be suffering from stress.**

- The School's Health, Safety and Risk Management Handbook.

The school has a Health and Safety Portfolio which is available in **[location]**. This includes Codes of Practice and reference documents which may be useful when managing stress. These include:-

- i) Reporting Incidents of Assault
- ii) Display Screen Equipment
- iii) Extreme Temperature
- iv) Management of Health and Safety at Work (Risk Assessment)
- v) No Smoking
- vi) Noise at Work
- vii) Pregnancy and your Health and Safety
- viii) Guidance Notes on the Workplace (Health Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992.
- ix) Lone Working

