



# Stress and Wellbeing at Work Policy

## Contents

1.	About this policy .....	2
2.	Who does this policy apply to? .....	2
3.	Who is responsible for this policy?.....	2
4.	Policy Aims .....	3
5.	Legal obligations .....	3
6.	Understanding stress and mental health .....	3
7.	Our approach to mental wellbeing in the workplace .....	4
8.	Supporting the implementation of this policy .....	4
9.	Addressing work-related stress.....	6
10.	Absence due to work-related stress or mental ill health .....	7
11.	Confidentiality .....	7
12.	Protection for those reporting stress or assisting with an investigation .....	8
13.	Other Related Policies .....	8
14.	UK General Data Protection Regulation 2021 .....	9
15.	Policy Review .....	9
16.	Equality Impact Assessment .....	9
Appendix 1 .....		10
Appendix 2 .....		20

## **1. About this policy**

- 1.1 ng homes is committed to protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff. We recognise the importance of identifying and tackling the causes of work-related stress. We also recognise that personal stress, while unrelated to the workplace, can adversely affect the wellbeing of staff at work.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to set out the measures we have in place to support the mental wellbeing of all our staff.
- 1.3 This policy does not form part of any contract of employment or other contract to provide services, and we may amend it at any time.
- 1.4 Any information you provide to us about your health will be processed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy. We recognise that such data is sensitive and will handle it in a confidential manner.

## **2. Who does this policy apply to?**

- 2.1 This policy applies to all employees, officers, consultants, self-employed contractors, casual workers, agency workers, volunteers and it applies across the ng group.

## **3. Who is responsible for this policy?**

- 3.1 The Chief Executive Officer has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. The Chief Executive officer has delegated responsibility for overseeing its implementation to the Director of Corporate Services.
- 3.2 Any questions employees may have about the day-to-day application of this policy should be referred to their line manager or the HR team in the first instance.

## **4. Policy Aims**

### **4.1 This policy aims to:**

- (a) Promote a culture of mental and physical wellbeing.
- (b) Increase awareness of stress.
- (c) Provide line managers with a clear process to use should an employee report that they are suffering from stress.
- (d) Provide details of the proactive measures the organisation will implement to help reduce and, where possible, eliminate stress and its causes.

## **5. Legal obligations**

- 5.1 ng homes has a legal duty to take reasonable care to ensure that the health of its staff members is not put at risk by excessive pressures or demands arising from the way work is organised.
- 5.2 This policy takes account of our obligations under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Employment Rights Act 1996, Protection from Harassment Act 1997, Working Time Regulations 1998 and Equality Act 2010.

## **6. Understanding stress and mental health**

- 6.1 Stress is the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or demands placed on them. Stress is not an illness but, sustained over a period of time, it can lead to mental and/or physical illness.
- 6.2 Mental health is a term to describe our emotional, psychological and social wellbeing; it affects how we think, feel and act and how we cope with the normal pressures of everyday life. Positive mental health is rarely an absolute state since factors inside and outside work affect mental health, meaning that we move on a spectrum that ranges from being in good to poor mental health.
- 6.3 There is an important distinction between working under pressure and experiencing stress. Certain levels of pressure are acceptable and normal in every job. They can improve performance, enable individuals to meet their full potential and provide a sense of achievement and job satisfaction. However, when pressure becomes excessive it produces stress and undermines mental health.
- 6.4 Pressures outside the workplace, whether the result of unexpected or traumatic events such as accidents, illness, bereavement, family breakdown or financial worries, can result in stress and poor mental health. They can also compound normal workplace pressures.
- 6.5 ng homes recognises that individuals react to similar situations in different ways and that what triggers stress and poor mental health varies from person to person.

## **7. Our approach to mental wellbeing in the workplace**

### **7.1** ng homes will:

- (a) Promote a culture of open communication by providing both formal and informal channels through which staff can raise concerns.
- (b) Take account of stress and mental wellbeing when planning and allocating workloads. We will provide opportunities to discuss these through our Staff Check-in process.
- (c) Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking and monitor holidays to ensure that staff are using their entitlement.
- (d) Ensure risk assessments include or specifically address work-related stress.
- (e) Facilitate requests for flexible working where reasonably practicable.
- (f) Ensure that in any workplace reorganisation or restructure, our change management processes are designed to minimise uncertainty and stress.
- (g) Implement policies and procedures to address factors that can cause or worsen stress in particular so that we can provide a workplace free from harassment, bullying and victimisation and address inappropriate behaviour through appropriate action which may include disciplinary action.
- (h) Provide training to help all staff understand and recognise the causes of work-related stress and mental ill health, the impact of stress from factors in everyday life and the steps they can take to protect and enhance their own mental wellbeing and that of their colleagues.
- (i) Provide support services such as occupational health, confidential counselling and access to an employee assistance programme for staff affected by or absent by reason of stress.

## **8. Supporting the implementation of this policy**

### **8.1** All staff

All staff should ensure that they are familiar with this policy and act in accordance with its aims and objectives. Staff should plan and organise their work to meet personal and organisational objectives and co-operate with support, advice and guidance that may be offered by line managers or the HR team. Anyone who experiences or is aware of a situation that may result in work-related stress or undermine mental wellbeing at work for themselves or others, should speak to their line manager or another manager, where appropriate, at the earliest opportunity. Staff should participate in the organisation's measures to assist in reducing or eliminating stress and should be aware of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Management standards and signs of stress. The HSE Management Standards and associated tools support organisations and individuals in tackling work

related stress. The standards cover six key areas:

- Demands
- Control
- Support
- Relationships
- Role
- Change

Full descriptions of the standards and typical behaviours which can be a sign of stress are available from the HSE website [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

## 8.2 Managers

All managers have a responsibility to recognise potential issues of work-related stress or mental ill health in the staff they manage. They will be given training to support them in this and should seek advice from their line manager and/or HR in the event that they have concerns. All managers should provide support to staff by working with the HR team and through making appropriate referrals to the Association's Occupational Health provider. In particular, they need to:

- (a) Promote a culture of open communication.
- (b) Attend stress awareness training.
- (c) Effectively plan and provide feedback on performance.
- (d) Ensure that staff receive necessary training.
- (e) Monitor workloads and reallocate work where necessary.
- (f) Ensure that staff understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and others, and act to correct behaviour that falls below those standards.
- (g) To be aware of signs of stress and intervene where necessary.
- (h) To ensure that a stress risk assessment is conducted with their staff.
- (i) To encourage staff to contribute to the organisation's stress questionnaires.
- (j) To take steps to help staff maintain a state of good mental health e.g. encourage staff to take lunch breaks and holidays throughout the year at reasonable intervals.
- (k) Promote the benefits of physical activity for both physical and mental health.
- (l) Ensure staff are not working excessive hours on a regular or prolonged basis.

## 8.3 Other services

We have the following services in place to assist staff who may be suffering from stress or poor mental health:

- (a) Training on stress management and mental wellbeing, to assist staff and line managers in recognising and coping with stress and to take care of their mental health.
- (b) A confidential counselling service staffed by independent advisers with access to specialist counsellors is available through the Association's Company Health Plan

provider, Simplyhealth. The helpline is available 24/7 on 0800 975 3347.

- (c) Our Occupational Health advisors who can:
  - (i) provide specialist advice on work-related stress and mental wellbeing.
  - (ii) support individuals who have been off sick and advise on return-to-work plans, including phased returns and adjustments to support a return to work.; and
  - (iii) make referrals to workplace counsellors or specialists.
- (d) Members of our HR team are also available to support staff suffering from work-related stress or mental health issues.

8.4 Help and information can also be obtained from Mind, the mental health charity, [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk) or the Samaritans, [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org).

8.5 To support the organisation's commitment to reducing the risk of stress occurring, ng homes will ensure that the following initiatives will be implemented and adopted:

- (a) Employee questionnaires – ng homes will conduct a stress survey among staff on a periodic basis to help inform the team / department risk assessment. This will assist in identifying any "at risk" areas within the organisation.
- (b) Analysing information – ng homes will review relevant data e.g. absence, employee concerns, employee questionnaires etc. to identify areas where stress is, or could be a risk.
- (c) Risk assessments – stress risk assessments will be conducted as appropriate.

8.6 If any staff member is considered by their line manager or colleagues to be at serious risk of self-harm, or of harming others, action must be taken immediately. The matter should be referred to their line manager or the HR team who will seek medical advice from Occupational Health if that is reasonably practicable. Every effort will be made to contact any person nominated by the staff member as an emergency contact. Where necessary the emergency services will be called. The wellbeing of the staff member and those around them will always be our first concern.

## **9. Addressing work-related stress**

9.1 If any staff member believes they are suffering from work-related stress they should discuss this with their line manager in the first instance. If they feel unable to do so they should contact the HR team.

9.2 Once an issue affecting your health comes to the attention of the line manager or a member of the HR team, we will:

- (a) arrange a meeting with the staff member to discuss what steps can be taken to address that issue. They will be provided with an Occupational Health Individual Stress Risk Assessment to complete (see Appendix 1) and will be provided with

guidance in relation to this. The form has been produced by the organisation's independent professional Occupational Health Provider, Raymore Occupational Health.

- (b) In addition to the Occupational Health Individual Stress Risk Assessment, where appropriate ng homes will also use the Individual Employee Stress Questionnaire, included as part of this policy (See Appendix 2), this covers the six HSE Stress Management Standards.
- (c) Once you have completed the documents these should be returned to the line manager or the HR team, as appropriate. The line manager or the HR team will then complete the sections appropriate to them.
- (d) A further meeting will then be arranged to discuss the Individual Stress Risk Assessment, identify ways of managing the issues, and any support or interim arrangements that may assist your recovery.
- (e) At the conclusion of the meeting, an action plan will be completed to summarise the discussions and agree what actions will be taken by the organisation, the line manager and the employee.

9.3 Other steps may include any of the following:

- (a) A review of the staff member's current job role, responsibilities, workload and working hours. Adjustments may be agreed to these, on a temporary basis and subject to further review, where appropriate.
- (b) Where it appears that stress has been caused by bullying or harassment, investigation under our Disciplinary and/or Grievance Procedures.
- (c) Referral for medical advice, treatment and/or a medical report to be provided by Occupational Health, our medical advisers or any specialist or GP who has been treating you.
- (d) If the staff member is on sickness absence, an appropriate return to work programme may be discussed in line with our Attendance and Absence Management Policy.

9.4 If the staff member's line manager is a contributing factor to their stress, another appropriate manager e.g. a manager one level above will conduct the meetings.

## **10. Absence due to work-related stress or mental ill health**

10.1 If a staff member is absent due to work-related stress or mental ill health, they should follow the sickness absence reporting procedure contained in their contract and the organisation's Attendance and Absence Management Policy.

## **11. Confidentiality**

11.1 Information about stress, mental health and mental wellbeing is highly sensitive. Every member of staff is responsible for observing the high level of confidentiality that is required

when dealing with information about stress or mental health whether they are supporting a colleague or because they are otherwise involved in the operation of a workplace policy or procedure.

11.2 Breach of confidentiality may give rise to disciplinary action.

11.3 However, there are occasions when information about stress or mental wellbeing needs to be shared with third parties. For example:

- (a) Where steps need to be taken to address work-related stress such as reallocating work within a team.
- (b) Where medical advice is required on how to support a member of staff, address issues raised by work-related stress or address issues raised by mental ill health.
- (c) Where allegations of harassment, bullying or other misconduct require a disciplinary investigation or proceedings to take place.
- (d) Where a member of staff presents an immediate danger to themselves or others.

In these circumstances, wherever possible, matters will be discussed with the member of staff concerned before any action is taken.

## **12. Protection for those reporting stress or assisting with an investigation**

12.1 Staff who report that they are suffering from work-related stress or mental ill health, who support a colleague in making such a report or who participate in any investigation connected with this policy in good faith will be protected from any form of intimidation or victimisation.

12.2 If a staff member feels they have been subjected to any such intimidation or victimisation, they should seek support from their line manager or the HR team. They may also raise a complaint in accordance with our Grievance Procedure.

12.3 If, after investigation, a staff member is found to have provided false information in bad faith, they will be subject to action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

## **13. Other Related Policies**

- ng homes Attendance and Absence Management
- ng2 Attendance and Absence Management
- Health and Safety Manual
- Code of Conduct for Staff
- Dignity at Work
- Data Protection
- Staff Check-in
- Grievance Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Recruitment



- Terms and Conditions of Employment

#### **14. UK General Data Protection Regulation 2021**

- 14.1 The organisation will treat personal data in line with our obligations under the UK General Data Protection Regulation 2021 (UK GDPR) and the Association's Data Protection Policy. Information regarding how personal data will be used and the basis for processing personal data is provided in our Employee Fair Processing Notice.

#### **15. Policy Review**

- 15.1 This Policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier in line with regulatory or legislative guidance/changes or good practice guidelines.

#### **16. Equality Impact Assessment**

- 16.1 This Policy is equally applicable to all and has no detrimental impact on protected characteristic groups as specified within the Equality Act 2010.

#### **Additional sources of information**

- Health and Safety Executive (HSE) <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/>

## Appendix 1



## Individual Stress Risk Assessment

Employee Name

Address

Occupation

Manager

HR Consultant

Date Commenced



### Purpose of Individual Stress Risk Assessment

This Individual Stress Risk Assessment (ISRA) process is to assist in an employer and employee to identify issues in the workplace (stressors) that the employee feels gives rise to stress and to aid discussions about and to seek reasonable interventions that can assist in reducing the effect of those stressors. This is worthwhile doing because stress is a risk factor to mental wellbeing.

### What are reasonable interventions?

Interventions that the employer may identify as reasonable are those interventions or changes that are proportionate, practicable and cost-effective for the organisation to implement in the long term.

Sometimes there are not reasonably practicable interventions that an employer can implement for all, or even any, of the stressors raised by an employee. Most interventions that might be feasible in the workplace do not involve large additional expense or resources but this is dependent on the specific organisation and the stressors raised by the employee. This is why this process is an Individual assessment.

### What is the outcome of this process?

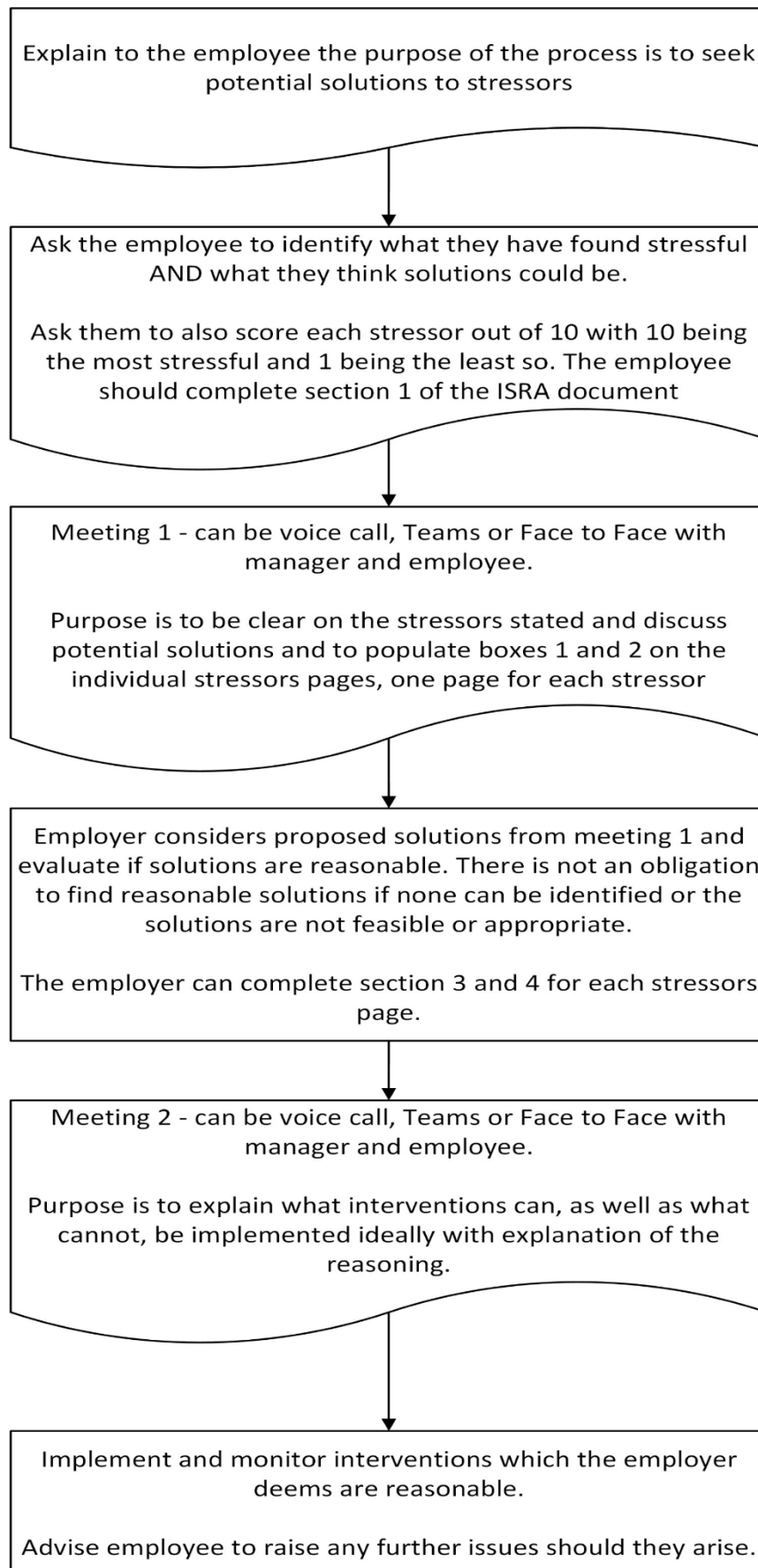
By undergoing this process, an employee has the opportunity to clearly state what their stressor(s) is and also to put forward potential solutions for consideration by the employer.

The process involves discussion and dialogue focused on constructive outcomes, wherever possible. At the end of the process, the employer makes the final decision on what solutions can, if any, be implemented.

Usually there is agreement on the way forward but such agreement might not be achieved and agreement is not a requirement of the process. Employees will have a clear response as to what can and, equally, cannot be done to address the stressor(s) raised. It is important for the employee to be aware of what the employer is able to do about the stressors raised, if anything and to what extent. This requires the discussion process facilitated by this ISRA process.

### Will Occupational Health be involved?

It is not a requirement for OH to be involved in all workplace stress situations and many such situations can be constructively resolved just with employer - employee discussions. If there are additional health or sickness absence factors which have arisen then OH may well be involved. As to whether an intervention for a stated stressor is reasonable, that is for the employer to decide and not Occupational Health, although OH may make some suggestions for consideration.



## PART 1: SUMMARY AND SCORING OF ISSUES BY EMPLOYEE

1. The **employee** should summarise the issues which they feel have been the cause of stress, in the grid below.
2. The **employee** should score each issue out of 10, in their view.
3. A 9/10 issue is a more important risk factor than a 2/10 issue.
4. There can be more than one issue with the same score out of 10.
5. You can include work and non-work issues

Issue Number	Summary of the issue	Score out of 10
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

*If there are more than 5 issues, put this in the 'Additional Information' section at the end of this document*

1. Complete a separate sheet for each issue listed in Section 1.
2. Consideration should be given to the suggestions made by the employee.
3. Actions should be reasonable and sustainable in the longer term by the organisation.

**2.1.1 Details of the *employee's issue*****2.1.2 Potential solutions suggested by the *employee*****2.1.3 Consideration of the issues raised (*employer*)****2.1.4 Actions which can or cannot be taken by the employer (*employer's opinion*)**

1. Complete a separate sheet for each issue listed in Section 1.
2. Consideration should be given to the suggestions made by the employee.
3. Actions should be reasonable and sustainable in the longer term by the organisation.

**2.2.1 Details of the *employee's issue*****2.2.2 Potential solutions suggested by the *employee*****2.2.3 Consideration of the issues raised (*employer*)****2.2.4 Actions which can or cannot be taken by the employer (*employer's opinion*)**

1. Complete a separate sheet for each issue listed in Section 1.
2. Consideration should be given to the suggestions made by the employee.
3. Actions should be reasonable and sustainable in the longer term by the organisation.

**2.3.1 Details of the *employee's issue*****2.3.2 Potential solutions suggested by the *employee*****2.3.3 Consideration of the issues raised (*employer*)****2.3.4 Actions which can or cannot be taken by the employer (*employer's opinion*)**



1. Complete a separate sheet for each issue listed in Section 1.
2. Consideration should be given to the suggestions made by the employee.
3. Actions should be reasonable and sustainable in the longer term by the organisation.

**2.4.1 Details of the *employee's issue*****2.4.2 Potential solutions suggested by the *employee*****2.4.3 Consideration of the issues raised (*employer*)****2.4.4 Actions which can or cannot be taken by the employer (*employer's opinion*)**

1. Complete a separate sheet for each issue listed in Section 1.
2. Consideration should be given to the suggestions made by the employee.
3. Actions should be reasonable and sustainable in the longer term by the organisation.

**2.5.1 Details of the *employee's issue*****2.5.2 Potential solutions suggested by the *employee*****2.5.3 Consideration of the issues raised (*employer*)****2.5.4 Actions which can or cannot be taken by the employer (*employer's opinion*)**

### PART 3: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Use this section to add any further information or to expand on any of the answers already given**

Date Concluded:



## Appendix 2

### Individual Employee Stress Questionnaire

You have been given this questionnaire to complete as it has been highlighted to your line manager that you are or may be feeling stressed. The purpose of this questionnaire is to identify what factors may be contributing to you feeling stressed and for you to think about and detail what you feel would help reduce or take away your stressors. Once you have completed the form, please return it to your line manager.

Your line manager will complete their comments and return a copy of the document to you with details of a meeting to discuss your stressors and what support may be available.

Cause of Stress	Question	If yes, please provide details if this causes an issue for you in work	What do you feel could help in changing the situation?	Managers comments	Details of Support discussed
Demands	Do different people at work demand that you complete tasks which are hard to combine?				
	Do you feel you have unachievable deadlines?				
	Do you feel you have to work very intensively the majority of the time?				
	Do you feel you have to neglect some tasks as you have too much to do?				

	Do you feel that you are unable totake breaks due to your workload?				
	Do you feel pressured to work longhours?				
	Do you feel that you have to workfast the majority of the time?				
	Do you feel you have unrealistic time pressures?				
Control	Do you feel you can decide when totake a break from your work?				
	Do you feel you have a say in thepace/speed that you work?				
	Do you feel you have any choiceover how you do your work?				
	Do you feel you have any choice inwhat work you do on a day to day basis?				
	Do you feel you have any influenceover the way you do your work?				
	Do you feel that your work time isflexible?				
	Do you feel your manager gives you enough feedback on the workyou do?				

Support (Manager)	Do you feel you can rely on your manager to assist you with a workproblem?				
	Do you feel you can talk to your manager about something that may upset, annoy or distress you at work?				
	Do you feel that your managerencourages you at work?				
Support (Peers)	Do you feel your colleagues would help you if your work becamedifficult?				
	Do you feel you get the help and support from your colleagues thatyou need?				
	Do you feel you are respected byyour work colleagues?				
	Do you feel you're your colleaguesgive you the respect you deserve?				
	Do you feel that your colleagues will listen to any work relatedproblems you may have?				
	Do you feel you have been personally harassed, in the form of unkind words or behaviour atwork?				

Relationships	Do you feel that there is/or has been friction or anger between colleagues?				
	Do you feel you are or have been bullied at work?				
	Do you feel that relationships are strained at work?				
Role	Are you clear about what work is expected of you at work?				
	Do you know how to go about doing your job?				
	Are you clear about the goals and objectives for your team?				
	Do you understand how your work fits in to the overall aims of your organisation?				
Change	Do you feel you have enough opportunities to ask your manager questions about change?				
	Do you feel you are consulted about changes within your workplace?				
	When changes are made in work, do you feel that they are clearly explained as to how they would work in practice?				

Other issues	Do you feel that there are any other factors in work that may be contributing to the way you are feeling just now?				
	Do you feel that there is anything outside of work that may be contributing to the way you are feeling just now?				



## Stressors

Now that you have identified your stressors please rank them, detailing the examples you have provided above in the order of 1-10 with 10 having the biggest impact on you and 1 the least.

Example of Stressor	1-10	Example of Stressor	1-10

## Factors outside of work

This list of questions is mainly focused on factors at work. However, there may be factors outside work, e.g. family life, which may be affecting your ability to cope at work, and which in normal circumstances you would be able to deal with.

It may be beneficial for you to share these with your line manager (or another manager) as you can discuss with them if there are any short term support measures that could be put in place to assist you at this time.

In addition your manager may be able to direct you to any additional support services you may not have thought of before.

## Action Plan

Detail below the action plan discussed with your line manager to support you in managing your stressors

Stressor/Area of Concern	Agreed Action	Review Date