



What should I know?

Health, work and wellbeing are closely and powerfully linked. You as an employer and your employees can reap many benefits by managing and minimising risks to health at work.

Work that causes unacceptable interference with normal life can damage workers' mental or physical health and behaviours.

The signs, symptoms and effects of damage can include:

- » anxiety and depression
- » frequent sickness absence or late arrivals
- » underperformance
- » high staff turnover
- » loss of productivity
- » family or relationship breakdown
- » tribunals, court cases and compensation claims.

The damage is caused by, for example:

- » demanding or expecting long working hours
- » exerting unacceptable work pressures
- » conflicts between personal commitments at home and work.

Am I at risk?

You, your business and staff may be at risk, if there are signs of:

- » staff working away from home for extended hours in a day for many days and not being compensated
- » staff being bullied or harassed into doing extra work
- » staff regularly working more than the daily agreed hours
- » evidence of work building up
- » the quality of the work is falling
- » increased sickness absence
- » unusually high staff turnover.

What should I do?

- » Identify the risk factors.
- » Identify who is at risk and why.
- » Develop control measures and procedures.
- » Monitor the effectiveness of the control measures and procedures.
- » Talk to staff to identify any issues they may have.
- » Ensure the control measures you provide are used correctly and maintained.
- » Consult employees or their representatives on matters affecting their health and safety.

What should I avoid?

- » Demanding unacceptable hours of work.
- » Subjecting workers to verbal, physical or mental abuse to make them work extra hours.
- » Failing to minimise number of hours or days away from home.
- » Failing to deal with work/life balance issues.
- » Tolerating misuse or abuse of power, causing stress or affecting work/life balance.

Where can I get help?

- » Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives, tel: 0800 019 2211 or www.healthyworkinglives.com
- » Health and Safety Executive, www.hse.gov.uk/stress

For further details see 'Where to get extra help and support' on pages 83–88.

This is not a full list.

What should I know?

Harassment at work is unlawful and it can put employees' health at risk. The Prevention of Harassment Act and other laws protect them.

Bullying and harassment at work can damage mental health and behaviours.

The signs, symptoms and effects of the damage can include:

- » anxiety, irritability, depression
- » lack of drive and commitment
- » loss of confidence and concentration
- » loss of productivity
- » increased sickness absence
- » unusual patterns of staff turnover
- » tribunals, court cases or compensation claims.

The damage is caused by, for example:

- » intimidation or threats
- » humiliation
- » ridicule or mockery
- » unwelcome attention or interest
- » unfair treatment with regard to aspects of work
- » offensive language.

All of these can take place in private or in front of others.

Am I at risk?

You, your business and staff may be at risk, if there are signs of:

- » verbal or physical abuse
- » staff being ignored, humiliated or subjected to rumours or gossip
- » discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, age, religion or belief or sexual orientation
- » unfair treatment for a specific reason or purpose
- » unfounded threats to job security, promotion or personal safety.

What should I do?

- » Publicise what types of behaviours and actions are unacceptable.
- » Publicise the consequences of unacceptable behaviours and actions.
- » Monitor the effectiveness of company policy.
- » Talk to staff to identify any issues they may have.
- » Deal promptly with the alleged 'bully'.
- » Ensure control measures you provide are used correctly and maintained.
- » Consult employees or their representatives on matters affecting their health and safety.

What should I avoid?

- » Unfair treatment of workers.
- » Subjecting workers to verbal, physical or mental abuse.
- » Tolerating offensive, malicious, humiliating or unfair behaviours.
- » Setting unachievable targets and demands.
- » Misuse or abuse of power.

Where can I get help?

- » Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives, tel: 0800 019 2211 or www.healthyworkinglives.com
- » Health and Safety Executive, www.hse.gov.uk/stress

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Additional information

Bullies can be individuals from any position in the organisation; often they have, or wish to have, power and influence over decision-making and resources in relation to the person being bullied. Bullying may include offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour and/or abuse or misuse of power or influence through other means to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the victim.

Harassment relates to unlawful discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, nationality or accent.

Bullying and harassment can be carried out on individuals or a group. The actions can occur in private or in public, within the organisation or elsewhere.

Behaviours:

Examples of bullying behaviours include the following:

- » Copying notes or memos for the purpose of bullying, undermining or harassment.

- » Constantly singling out or excluding a person.
- » Knowingly setting up someone to fail.
- » Unwelcome sexual comments and advances.
- » Constant criticism and not offering support, help, training or a suitable solution.
- » Blocking career development.
- » Unwelcome comments on the grounds described above.

Setting up preventive policies and procedures:

- » defines, publicise and monitor unacceptable behaviours
- » sets out the first steps to be taken by any member of staff who feels they are being bullied or harassed (e.g. evidence gathering, informal discussion with line manager or a designated colleague)
- » establishes what should happen if the first steps did not work (e.g. mediation, formal investigation, legal action).

Steps to tackle bullying include:

- » Mediating an agreement between the parties on standards of behaviour.
- » Mentoring and support.
- » Training (e.g. victim assertiveness, communication; bully performance management, equal opportunities, managing people, teamworking).
- » Transferring one of the party and monitoring developments.
- » Looking at the causes and dealing with them (e.g. unfair remuneration, management styles, diversity issues, unfair performance agreement, assessment or rewards).

This is not a full list.

Work-related stress

What should I know?

Over half a million people report experiencing work-related stress which has made them ill. Because of this, employers are expected to take measures to reduce the risk.

Stress at work can damage mental and physical health and behaviours.

The signs, symptoms and effects of stress can include:

- » tearfulness
- » frustration, irritability, anger
- » increased sensitivity
- » anxiety and/or depression
- » lack of drive and commitment
- » loss of confidence, concentration and/or memory
- » loss of productivity
- » increased sickness absence
- » tribunals, court cases, compensation claims.

The damage can be caused by any of the following:

- » too much pressure and/or work
- » unacceptable time constraints or deadlines
- » conflicting demands or exerting too much pressure
- » lack of challenge or boredom
- » little or no freedom or influence on how to deliver the work
- » incompetence or not having been trained to do the work
- » inadequacies of others in the team affecting quality of work or reputation
- » humiliation, ridicule, mockery, intimidation, threats
- » unwelcome attention or interest
- » unfair treatment with regard to aspects of work.

Am I at risk?

You, your business and staff may be at risk, if there are signs of:

- » demands for unacceptable productivity
- » staff being asked to cut corners which are unacceptable or illegal

- » work building up
- » failures in an individual's punctuality, quality of work or productivity
- » festering, long-standing or unresolved conflicts
- » staff being ignored, humiliated or subjected to rumours or gossip
- » discrimination or unacceptable treatment on the grounds of race, gender, disability, age, religion or belief or sexual orientation
- » staff being treated unfairly for a specific reason
- » unfounded threats to job security, promotion or personal safety.

What should I do?

- » Identify the risk factors.
- » Identify who is at risk and why.
- » Develop control measures and procedures.
- » Monitor the effectiveness of the control measures and procedures.
- » Talk to staff and identify any issues they may have.
- » Seek help (e.g. medical, managerial, coaching) promptly.

- » Ensure control measures you provide are used correctly and maintained.
- » Consult employees or their representatives on matters affecting their health and safety.

What should I avoid?

- » Demanding unacceptable productivity targets or behaviours.
- » Failing to provide training, support and facilities to deliver the work.
- » Subjecting workers to verbal, physical or mental abuse.
- » Failing to minimise conflicts between teams and individuals.
- » Tolerating offensive, malicious, humiliating or unfair behaviours.
- » Misuse or abuse of power causing stress to recipients.

Where can I get help?

- » Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives, tel: 0800 019 2211 or www.healthyworkinglives.com
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Additional information

Stress at work is an unwanted reaction that occurs when a person experiences too much pressure, other types of demands, or is subjected to unacceptable behaviours. It is often a symptom of poor employment relations.

Exerting or being subjected to unreasonable pressure at work is different from the positive challenges, demands, competition and timescales that occur at work.

Examples of positive signs and approaches for minimising stress at work include the following:

Demands

- » Staff say they are able to cope with the demands of the job.
- » Staff skills and abilities are matched to the job and its demands.
- » Targets and productivity demands match salaried hours of work.
- » Work facilities (e.g. lighting, workstations) take account of individuals' needs.

Control

- » Staff report that they are able to have a say about the way in which their job is done.
- » Staff are encouraged to use initiative and skills to deliver the job.
- » Staff are encouraged or helped to develop existing skills, and learn or develop new skills.
- » Staff are consulted on work patterns and breaks and have some freedom on pace of work.

Support

- » Staff say they receive adequate information and support from colleagues and management.
- » Policies and procedures adequately support the staff.
- » Staff encouraged to support colleagues.
- » Staff know what support and resources are available and how to access them to do the job, develop new skills and seek career progression.
- » Staff are provided with regular feedback and encouragement.

Relationships:

- » Staff say they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours.
- » Policies and procedures promote positive behaviours, minimise conflicts, ensure fairness and help to resolve conflicts and unacceptable behaviours.
- » Staff share information to help job delivery and staff development.

Role:

- » Staff say they understand their roles and responsibilities.
- » Staff are provided with information that enables them to understand their roles and responsibilities.
- » The roles and responsibilities of individual staff are clear to the member of staff concerned, and others.

Change:

- » Staff say they are involved and consulted on organisational changes.
- » Timely information (including the reasons) is provided.
- » Adequate consultation and opportunities are provided to influence proposals.
- » Timetables for changes (including the reasons) are made known.
- » Adequate support and training are provided to cope with changes (e.g. job, role, environment, location).

You should have systems in place for each of these issues to deal with individual concerns.

This is not a full list.