

## How To – Manage individual cases of occupational stress

The Council have developed a range of preventative measures to control the risk of employees experiencing stress; however, there may be incidences of occupational stress in the workplace that managers will be required to deal with effectively. It is important for a manager to take action as soon as practicable once they are aware or suspect that stress has become an issue for an employee.

Taking steps at an early stage to alleviate the effects of stress should help to reduce the risk of ill health and poor wellbeing, reduced productivity, sickness absence and presenteeism.

In accordance with the Council’s Supporting Health and Wellbeing Procedure, the manager and employee should discuss whether or not the employee has been experiencing stress and what the employee considers to be the contributing factors.

It is important to ensure that the discussion takes place in a private location and sufficient time is set aside for the discussion. Managers should also ensure that the discussion is conducted in an open and supportive manner.

<b>Don't say</b>	<b>Do say</b>
You're all over the place at the moment, what's up?	I'm concerned that you appear to be under some pressure. Can we talk about it?
You're letting the team down	One of your colleagues has told me in confidence that they are worried about you
So, I heard on the grapevine that your wife has left you.	Are there any problems at home that you want to talk about?
I really need someone who is up to the job	I want to help resolve this issue. Do you think some extra support or training might help?
Pull yourself together and get on with it	What else do you think we could do to improve things for you?
I hope you're not going to end up a nutcase?	Have you been to see your GP? If so, did you mention this to your GP? I will provide you with contact details for agencies that you may find supportive.
I'm really busy and I could do without spending any more time on this	I think we should meet again in a couple of weeks to see how things are going, but in the meantime please come and talk to me if you have any concerns.

Whilst employees are not obliged to disclose the details of their personal problems, if the employee advises that they are facing problems in their personal life it may be helpful to discuss what help can be made available such as counselling, temporary reduction to hours, bereavement support, debt advice etc. to enable the employee to return to effective working.

The discussion should be recorded on the [stress record of discussion form](#) and forwarded to the Employee Support Team. If there are work-related factors contributing to an employee's wellbeing, a copy should also be sent to the [Health, Safety & Wellbeing Team](#).

Following the discussion with the employee, if work-related factors have been highlighted by the employee, the manager should explain the stress action plan process and agree with the employee whether it would be appropriate to develop an individual stress action plan or whether appropriate control measures could be agreed outwith the stress action plan process.

If appropriate control measures can be agreed as part of the initial discussions the manager should ensure that the control measures are either documented on the stress record of discussion form or by other means deemed appropriate by the manager and employee. A review of the control measures should also be planned at an appropriate juncture.

If circumstances are such that engaging with the employee to agree an individual stress action plan is appropriate, the How To – Process for developing a stress action plan should be followed. [How To - Process For Developing a Stress Action Plan](#).