

Mental Wellbeing

Policy and guidance

Amended October 2012



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Introduction

Mental health problems are common and widely misunderstood. Significant mental distress will affect one in four of us in our lifetime and one in six of the population is suffering at any one time - enduring depression, stress or anxiety. The definitions of mental health vary and are dependent upon our individual life experiences and life context.



Anxiety, depression and excessive pressure (stress) affect 1 in 6 British workers each year and is costing organisations up to £26 billion every year;

- £2.4 billion on staff turnover due to poor mental wellbeing
- £15.1 billion by staff coming to work and underperforming because they are unable to cope (presentism)
- 70 million lost working days.

These conditions are common so the Council is taking steps to protect the mental health of its workforce.

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) definition of stress is “the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed upon them”.

Pressure vs Stress

There is a difference between stress and pressure. We all experience pressure on a daily basis, and need it to motivate us and enable us to perform at our best. It's when we experience excessive pressure without the opportunity to recover that we may experience stress and our resilience weakens.

The Councils Approach

The Council recognises that delivery of quality services to the community depends on a healthy, well motivated, workforce. It aims to minimise excessive pressure in the workplace with the provision of training and process to manage excessive pressure across the organisation. Staff are encouraged to express their concerns openly and to seek support without fear of being considered weak, incompetent, or at fault. [See useful support contacts on page 14.](#)

The Council acknowledges its legal obligations with respect to Health, Safety and Wellbeing and undertakes to ensure mental health conditions are treated in the same way as those affecting physical health. The Council also understands that people with mental health conditions may be protected under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005.

Policy Statement

This Council is committed to tackling the causes as well as the symptoms of excessive pressure (stress).

The Causes

The Council;

- Recognises the importance of skilled management and is committed to the provision of appropriate training, guidance and support to all levels of staff, and an increased understanding of stress and mental health issues throughout the organisation
- Expects managers to actively manage excessive pressure in the workplace, sympathetically, via pressure and resilience assessment
- Is committed to a communication strategy which includes consultation and feedback at all levels
- Promotes performance appraisal of staff in order to provide positive feedback and support

The Symptoms

The Council will;

- Help staff at all levels to manage excessive pressure in themselves and in those they manage by early recognition and appropriate intervention
- Continue to support the provision of initiatives which help tackle symptoms of poor mental health and stress
- Promote healthier lifestyles by promoting positive health and wellbeing
- Provide confidential advice to its management and employees via the Occupational Health Service
- Provide professional counselling where appropriate

Responsibilities

Managers

Managers have a responsibility to manage work performance, support the engagement and wellbeing of their staff, and create a productive, healthy working environment.

Managers and Supervisors are expected to;

- manage in a way which recognises and reduces pressure
- undertake risk assessments which incorporate pressure and resilience
- recognise the signs that may indicate excessive pressure within themselves or others
- develop skills in supporting colleagues and understand the measures necessary to address the risk of excessive pressure in the workplace
- be aware that their own behaviour may contribute to excessive pressure on others and take action to remedy this
- be aware of the sources of help and advice available to them

All Members of Staff

All members of staff have a responsibility to themselves and their colleagues to take action to minimise excessive pressure/stress in the workplace. This includes taking steps to minimise their own stress and to modify their behaviour when it is causing excessive pressure in others.

Staff should let their managers know of concerns or worries related to their work, which are causing excessive pressure and may adversely affect their health or their ability to perform their duties safely and effectively.

Trades Unions

Trade Unions offer support to their members and work with them to try and resolve matters involving excessive pressure at work. Union representatives also have a responsibility to liaise and work constructively with managers to reduce organisational pressures which contribute to stress in the workplace.

Pressure and Resilience Assessment

Introduction

The Pressure and Resilience Assessment is a tool to be used by managers, to identify workplace stressors, excessive pressure and actions that may help reduce them. The tool can be used to identify and reduce the excessive pressures that are affecting an individual or a team.

Who does it and when?

Employee pressure and resilience assessments are confidential and should be carried out by the manager with the employee, this is because they are best placed to tease out and understand excessive pressures and develop a good way forward.

The employee assessment should be undertaken by the manager as soon as there is indication that an employee is suffering from excessive pressure.

How is the assessment made?

The assessment should be carried out with sensitivity and there are pressure and resilience assessment and action plan templates on the intranet which will act as a prompt for teasing out key areas of excessive pressure. Link: <http://lbbd/hr/health-and-safety/health-wellbeing.htm>

The template is designed to reflect the Health & Safety Executive's (HSE's) Stress Management Standards.

If a manager needs support to understand the process, they should contact a member of the Occupational Health, Safety & Wellbeing team (OHSW).

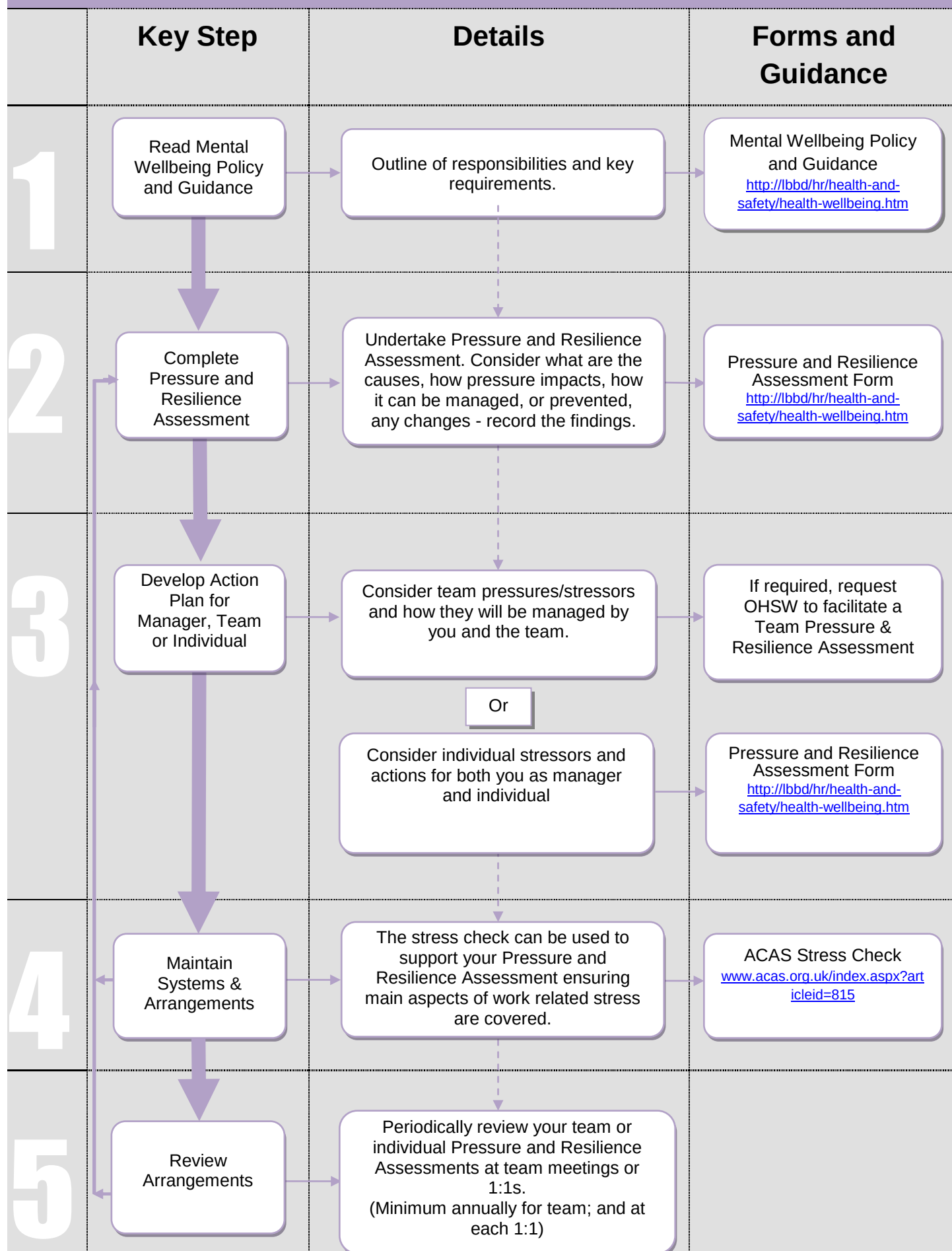
If a manager requires support to start the process, they should contact Occupational Health (OH) for assistance. The OH initial pressure and resilience assessment referral form can be found by accessing the following link <http://lbbd/hr/health-and-safety/occupational-health/occupational-health-home.htm> .

If appropriate, Occupational Health will carry out a pressure and resilience assessment to tease out the "employee perception stressors". The initial assessment will then be passed to the manager for development into a full employee pressure and resilience assessment and action plan.

Carrying Out Pressure and Resilience Assessments

Managers are expected to undertake a "team" pressure and resilience assessment regularly and ensure it is periodically reviewed at team meetings. If requested, OHSW will facilitate a team pressure and resilience assessment workshop on behalf of the manager. This enables the manager to be part of the workshop.

5 Key Steps: Managing Pressure and Resilience



Pressure and Resilience Assessment/Action plan



This form is designed to assist with identifying and managing pressure and build resilience.

Job or service area	
Individual or team assessment	
Responsible manager	
Assessor	
Date of assessment	
Signature	

Red (R)	Of concern, early action is needed.
Amber (A)	Acceptable, but there is a clear need for further action.
Green (G)	Good, but may require further action.

What are the likely causes of excessive pressure at work?	Current status R A G	What are you doing already?	What further action is necessary?	Action by whom	Action by when	Date completed
A) Demands of the job - Workload, work pattern and work environment including exposure to work related hazards.						
B) Control - How much say does the person or team have in the way they do their work?						

C) Role - How well do people understand their role in the organising and whether they have conflicting roles?				
				
D) Support- Do people have the necessary skills, information and support to carry out their work effectively?				
				
E) Relationships – Positive behaviours to avoid conflict, and dealing with unacceptable behaviours.				
				
F) Change – how is organisational change is managed and communicated?				
				

Pressure and Resilience Assessment

Guidance on completion of the form

Job covered if for an individual, service area if a team assessment

Usually line manager or supervisor

Line manager, GM or DD

ASSESSMENT / ACTION PLAN FOR PRESSURE AND RESILIENCE

Job/ Service Area Assessed	Individual/Team Assessment	Responsible Manager
Assessor	Date of assessment	Signature

Of concern, early action needed
Acceptable but clear need for further action
Good but may need further action

This is an assessment of the severity of the problem
See colour key

Examples to consider:

- Workload
- Work pattern
- Working environment
- Workplace hazards e.g V&A
- Tight deadlines
- Can't delegate

What are the likely causes of excessive pressure at work?	Current status	What are you doing already?	What further action is necessary	Action by Whom	Action by when	Done
A. DEMANDS OF THE JOB – workload, work pattern, work environment incl exposure to work related hazards						
B. CONTROL – how much say the person/team has in the way they do their work						
C. ROLE – how well people understand their role in the organising and whether they have conflicting roles						

Examples for Control are:

- Unable to exert control over demands
- Unable to make/participate in decision making
- No control over workflow
- Time management

Examples to consider:

- Lack of clarity about role
- Lack of support
- Changes in job without consultation
- Lack of development opportunities

Pressure and Resilience Assessment

Guidance on completion of the form; continued

Examples to consider:

- Availability of support from peers and manager
- Communication with others
- Whether valued
- Development opportunities
- Responsibility without authority

Examples to consider:

- Bullying & Harassment
- Social space
- How the person gets on with others
- Emotional demands

What are the likely causes of excessive pressure at work?	Current status	What are you doing already?	What further action is necessary	Action by Whom	Action by when	Done
D. SUPPORT- whether people have the necessary skills, information, and support to carry out their work effectively						
E. RELATIONSHIPS – positive behaviours to avoid conflict, and dealing with unacceptable behaviours						
F. CHANGE – how organisational change is managed and communicated						

Issues relevant to change may be:

- Pace and intensity
- Information about change
- Impact of reviews
- Change in job content

Strictly Confidential



Initial Pressure/Resilience Assessment Request Form

Individual pressure and resilience assessments should be undertaken by managers as soon as an employee indicates they are suffering from work related excessive pressure. This should be prior to Occupational Health referral wherever possible

Please return this completed form to: Occupational Health,
Civic Centre,
Dagenham,
Essex,
RM10 7BN
OccupationalHealth@lbbd.gov.uk

Your name:	
Job title:	
Department:	
Section:	
Line manager:	
Contact telephone number:	
Date of referral:	

For management referral		
	Yes	No
Is the member of staff absent from work?	☐	☐
If so, please give the date of first absence.		
Is the member of staff aware of this referral?	☐	☐
Has a team pressure and resilience assessment been carried out?	☐	☐
If yes, please provide a copy.		
Has the employee been referred to Occupational Health previously for mental wellbeing matters?	☐	☐

For self referral		
	Yes	No
Is your line manager aware of this referral?	☐	☐
Are you currently receiving counselling, or have you had counselling in the last six months?	☐	☐

Wellbeing

Getting the work-life balance right

Are you often the last to leave work?

There may be times when you need to work late to meet deadlines, but try to make this the exception not the norm. Long hours means you may be working harder, but not necessarily better – they may quickly take their toll on your concentration, productiveness and health.



Create clear boundaries between work and home

Try not to let work spill over into your personal life. If you need to take work home, designate a separate area for work and stick to it, you'll then find it much easier to close the door on work.

Start a To Do list

At the end of each day, go over your list and write up one for the next day. When your thoughts are down on paper, you'll find it easier not to think about work.

Use the time on your commute home to wind down from work

When travelling by public transport, set aside some time to yourself by reading or listening to music. Maybe try cycling part of your journey or getting off a stop early and taking a short walk.

Reclaim your lunch break

Work is a day of two halves. By taking a break in the middle of the day you give your brain a chance to relax and ready itself for the afternoon.

If you feel under excessive at work and are concerned about your workload, you may think that taking your lunch break is the worst thing you could do. Actually, taking a brief time-out period during the day can restore your energy levels and allow you to continue working productively.

Ask for help

If you feel your workload is spiralling out of control, take the opportunity to discuss it with your manager or supervisor. If you can't resolve the problems, other sources of help are available ([see useful contacts page 14](#)).

Useful Contacts

Occupational Health T: 020 8227 3315 / 3509 E: occupationalhealth@lbbd.gov.uk	Health, Safety and Wellbeing T: 020 8227 2104 / 2381
Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) T: 0800 3 58 48 58 W: www.validium.com	Revitalised W: www.revitalised.co.uk/bark-dag
Depression T: 0845 123 2320 W: www.depressionalliance.org/ The depression alliance help people to understand, work with, and recover from symptoms associated with depression.	Mental Health Foundation T: 0207 803 1100 W: www.mentalhealth.org.uk/welcome/ The Mental Health Foundation is a leading UK charity that provides information for anyone affected by mental health problems.
Mind T: 0845 766 0163 W: www.mind.org.uk/ Mind helps people take control of their mental health.	Stress W: www.stress.org.uk The website provides useful information on all aspects of stress.
Employee Health checks T: 020 8227 3315 / 3509 E: occupationalhealth@lbbd.gov.uk	

Support and Guidance

Policies, guidance and information relevant to staff employment and in particular those which deal with matters of health, safety and wellbeing, are available on the intranet: <http://lbbd/hr/health-and-safety/health-and-safety-home.htm>

Training information is available on pressure and resilience management and mental wellbeing via Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing 0208 227 - 2381/2104.