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HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION

Overview of development of Management Standards to tackle work-related stress and proposals for further development

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Issue

1. Update on development of Management Standards to tackle work-related stress, including initial feedback from the pilot study and expert working groups; and proposals for further development activity, including plans for a wider public consultation exercise. Detailed proposals, including a draft Consultation Document will be tabled for discussion at the Commission's meeting on 6 April 2004.

Timing

2. Routine.

Recommendation

3. That the Commission notes the excellent progress and successful engagement of key stakeholders in developing the Management Standards and supports the development of proposals for wider public consultation and discussion at the April meeting.

Background

4. The Commission last received a paper on work-related stress in April 2003 (HSC/03/30) where HSE reported back on progress with the programme of work (agreed in December 2000 - HSC/00/257) to deliver the Commission's strategy on work-related stress.

5. The strategy (agreed in May 2000 – HSC/00/97) was developed following publication of a discussion document in 1999 setting out options, including a regulatory approach. One of the four strands of the strategy is to work with partners to develop clear, agreed standards of good management practice for a range of stressors.

6. During discussions in April 2003 the Commission agreed that HSE should continue to develop and pilot the standards. However, the need to engage with Trade Unions, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) and to link with others' agendas was noted.

Argument

7. Work to develop the standards is progressing extremely well. In April 2003 the Commission took a risk and allowed us to try out the standards approach on our pilot organisations and helped us to widen the debate by placing the draft standards on our website. Since then, feedback from our pilot organisations and key stakeholders (such as occupational health practitioners, human resource managers, employee representatives and academics) is that the approach is both practicable and popular. Everyone has supported our approach and we have had wide-ranging, constructive and genuinely helpful debates on what the standards should look like.

8. However, we recognise we need to do more to engage with and gain commitment from other stakeholders, particularly those who are unsure how, or not yet committed to taking action on stress. Our view is that a wider public consultation exercise is an important next step. It will help raise awareness, change attitudes and build the trust of those on whom the ultimate success of the standards will depend.

Summary

9. By actively and openly engaging with our partners and key stakeholders throughout the development process we have developed an approach that is practicable, based on sound evidence and that experts and those who deal with stress in the workplace tell us will work.

10. We believe it is now timely to prepare for a wider public consultation exercise and begin a wider debate around the moral, financial and legal arguments for taking action on stress.

Consultation

11. A summary of key stakeholder engagement activity undertaken since last Spring is at **Annex 1**.

12. A summary of discussions and recommendations from four key stakeholder workshops held during Summer and Autumn 2003 is at **Annex 2** (a list of those who contributed to the debate is also included here).

13. An overview of feedback received so far from the pilot organisations (including a list of the 24 pilot organisations) is at **Annex 3**. The Annex is closed because pilot organisations have not given permission for interim finding to be made publicly available. The evaluation is ongoing and a full report will be available for discussion at the April meeting.

Presentation

14. We do not foresee particular presentational challenges with this work. Indeed, there is growing evidence that attitudes are changing as people finally realise work-related stress is a legitimate issue to tackle and is not going to go away. For example, an article in People Management (20 November 2003) was extremely supportive of our approach.

Costs and Benefits

15. The most appropriate form of the wider consultation has not been worked out and therefore, not costed. The cost will be considered as part of the work to take this forward.

Financial/Resource Implications for HSE

16. HSE has a dedicated priority programme management team of approximately 9.2 staff years for stress, supported by human factors experts. Resource to develop proposals for consultation has been allocated within the priority programme plan. This is subject to on-going discussions about resource allocated to the programme.

Environmental Implications

17. None.

Other Implications

18. None.

Action

19. The Commission is asked to note the excellent progress and successful engagement of key stakeholders in developing the Management Standards and support the development of proposals for wider public consultation (to be presented at the April meeting).

SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY

Event	Who was involved	Outcomes and actions	Date
Meeting of the Pilot Organisations	Pilot Organisations [See Annex 3]	• Revised draft guidance and tools developed and accepted • Need for guidance on developing solutions identified and confirmed – Lead to "real Solutions, Real People"	Late Spring 2003
HSE Management Standards Pilot begins	Pilot Organisations, HSE, HSL, and ACAS	• Pilot drawn to a close (See Annex 3) • Valuable feedback on the functionality of the process, tools and approach • Pilot organisations were generally able to identify key stressor areas • Government Departments involvement ties into "Government as Exemplar" programme.	Spring / Winter 2003 (Ongoing)
Pilot support framework	Pilot organisations, ACAS, HSL and HSE	• Support networks were developed for the pilot organisation with ACAS providing independent advice • Successful in supporting several of the key organisations and dealing with issues as they arose	Late Spring 2003 (Ongoing)
Pilot Webpages Launched	The webpages where made	• Front page coverage in the	Summer 2003

Event	Who was involved	Outcomes and actions	Date
(Including draft standards)	available globally without restriction	Independent • Further coverage on TV News, in daily press and trade articles • Sir Michael Marmott (Whitehall II) gave firm support on Channel 4 News • "Keep in touch" link established	
Improvement Notice (IN)	West Dorset NHS Hospital Trust, HSE, Exeter University, Department of Health	• Trust given until December 2003 to undertake a valid risk assessment (subsequently extended to March 2004) • Further press coverage with positive and constructive statement issued by the Trust • Trust has worked closely with HSE to comply • They intend to share their risk assessment with DoH and other trusts	Summer 2003
Initial Meeting: Institute of Directors	IOD / HSE	• Clearer understanding of IOD's position in respect of stress (concerns centre around GP reporting etc.) • This links with work ongoing in the Corporate Medical Group (DWP) to revise GP training regarding stress • Supportive and	Summer 2003

Event	Who was involved	Outcomes and actions	Date
		constructive feedback set out in letter from IOD subsequently	
HSE 'Manchester' Workshops (2)	List of delegates appended at Annex 2. Broadly: Academia, OH Professionals, HR professionals and some TUs.	• Positive and constructive feedback gathered on the descriptors of good management within the standards (see Annex 2)	Summer / Autumn 2003
ACAS / TUC Workshop	A group of TU Shop Stewards	• Good engagement and liaison with ACAS • Further feedback complementary to that received at the HSE workshops (included within Annex 2)	Autumn 2003
CIPD Workshops (3 - one with additional ACAS involvement)	HR Professionals from CIPD membership	• Feedback and developing consensus on the cross over between HR (Employment Relations) and H&S, and the barriers to the implementation of the standards • Developing understanding of types of support needed	Autumn / Winter2003
Pilot Meeting (Evaluation)	Pilot Organisations, Whitehall II Research Team (WHII - lead by Jenny Head), ACAS	• Agreement of evaluation framework • Agreement in principle from several pilot organisations to work further with WHII on longer term evaluation	Autumn 2003

Event	Who was involved	Outcomes and actions	Date
		• activities • Experiences of the process so far discussed and shared openly	
Real Solutions, Real People Conference	Presentations by the Chair and Des Browne, MP (Minister for Work); An invited audience of around 500. **Exhibitors** Pilot Organisations, ACAS, International Stress Management Association, IOSH **Attendees** H&S and HR Professionals, OH Professionals, TUs, Employers Organisations (IOD, EEF etc.).	• Real Solutions, Real People launched • Favourable press coverage (notably from Sky News), and Safety and Health Practitioner (SHP)	Autumn 2003
Whitehall II Research Meeting	Sir Michael Marmot, Jenny Head and research team	• Research proposal agreed and defined to undertake a further analysis of existing data relating to long term health impacts and exposure levels • Indications of support for HSE's approach	Autumn 2003
International Stress Awareness Day	ISMA, Stress Practitioners	• Workshops run across the UK by the International Stress Management Association (ISMA) promoting HSE's approach • Significant shift in direction from reactive to preventative approaches to	Autumn 2003

Event	Who was involved	Outcomes and actions	Date
		Stress Management	
EEF The Employers' Federation / Institute of Directors (IOD) Workshop	Senior Managers, and Geraint Day (IOD), Sayeed Khan (EEF), Steve Walter (EEF)	• General support for approach • One senior manager said: "If businesses aren't doing this (tackling stress) they shouldn't be in business"	Winter 2003
Questionnaire and Risk Assessment Development	A County Council's Children's, Schools and Families Department (Teachers, Social Workers, Child Protection Officers and Admin. Support Staff)	• Agreement for 14,000 staff to take part in the testing of an extended question set • Securing of the data for factor analysis and the refinement of the indicator tools and risk assessment process	Winter 2003

SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

Between July and November 2003 HSE met with representatives of stakeholder groups to talk to them about the draft Management Standards.

A total of four workshops were held to gain views and opinions on HSE's approach. Specific comments were also sought on how HSE could alter the standards to make them easier to understand and implement within organisations. Two of the workshops were aimed primarily aimed at academics and stress management practitioners; one at the Human Resources/Personnel community (held in conjunction with the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development); and one at trade union representatives (held in conjunction with ACAS).

The workshops followed a similar pattern, with delegates being asked to comment on the approach and then the 'states to be achieved' contained under each of the six main standard headings of Demands, Control, Support, Relationships, Role, and Change. If time allowed, delegates were also asked to comment on the percentage, which is a key element of the current draft standards.

Reassuringly, the same broad themes and comments emerged from the workshops, indicating that the main concerns of stakeholder groups were shared. Additionally, the workshops were deliberately run to be 'solution focused' - if delegates identified a challenge with the standards they were asked, as a group, to consider and suggest an alternative form of words. This has proved extremely useful in refining the draft standards.

Main themes

The main issues arising from the workshops were as follows:

General impressions

Few, if any, delegates disliked with the Management Standards approach. Several delegates liked the way the standards move away from 'stress' to distinct areas of work that, if not properly managed, could lead to ill health. The proposed framework was viewed as being more helpful and constructive for both the organisation and employees. Delegates also welcomed an approach that was based on employee involvement, was outcome focused, and which could run alongside existing organisational systems and arrangements.

Wording

Delegates commented that, without supporting guidance, some of the 'states to be achieved' were vague and open to interpretation. For example, under Demands the first state reads 'The organisation provides employees

(including managers) with adequate and achievable demands at work'. Delegates asked what 'adequate and achievable' meant and questioned whether this would be subject to individual factors.

Delegates raised similar points about other states and provided helpful and constructive feedback on how improvements could be made. It became apparent during the workshops that the role of supporting guidance providing, for example, information and advice on assessing organisational performance against the state, would be key.

Overlaps

The draft Management Standards have been designed to capture the key features of six elements of work organisation and/or job design. However, a case of stress is likely to contain a blend of several of these factors, for example, high job demands combined with a low degree of control and low support. Delegates questioned the need to cross-refer the standards and held the view that it would be more beneficial to write the standards as distinct elements. The following example provides an illustration - the fourth 'state to be achieved' under Demands reads 'Employees who are given high demands are able to have a say over the way the work is undertaken (see standard on Control)'. Delegates were of the view that the key components of this state were covered under Control and that cross-referring was superfluous and could be confusing.

Gaps

While the six core standard areas were believed to be adequate, delegates suggested practical improvements to help broaden their coverage and improve uptake. For example, where possible the standards should be aligned to other organisational performance indicators (e.g. IiP) and should refer to other relevant statutory provisions when appropriate (e.g. Change should refer to employee consultation).

Delegates also encouraged HSE to illustrate the standards with examples and to consider how they would work in a range of workplaces, ranging from office-based environments where, for example, human resource frameworks may already exist, through to construction sites where some of the existing principles contained in the draft standards could not be applied.

The percentage

Delegate views were polarised - some commented that the percentage was unhelpful and could lead to a pass/fail system with organisations simply issuing questionnaires and using the results to demonstrate compliance; others liked the percentage as it provided a useful indicator of performance and could act as a motivator.

Next steps

The issues arising out of the four workshops have been captured in a more detailed summary report and this is being used to refine the standards and our approach. A copy of the summary report has been sent to delegates and will be published on the web site in January. The full report is available from the Stress Priority Progamme Team.

DELEGATE LIST FOR STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOPS

Professor	Raymond	Agius	Centre for Occupational and Environmental Health, University of Manchester
Dr	Chiara	Amati	The Kiel Centre
Dr	Rosemary	Anderson	International Stress Management Association
Mr	Steve	Bailey	Corporate Environment Health and Safety
Dr	John	Ballard	IRS
Ms	Jo	Berriman	Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd
Mr	Andrew	Bickerstaff	Corporate Safety
Ms	Tina	Bond	Occupational Health Manager
Dr	Frank	Bond	University of London Goldsmiths College
Mr	Malcolm	Boswell	Assistant Director, ACAS
Dr	Rob	Briner	Senior Lecturer, Birkbeck College
Mr	Arthur	Champion	Zurich Financial Services
Ms	Lesley	Cooper	Working Well
Professor	Cary	Cooper	Lancaster University Management School
Dr	Eleanor	Davies	University of Huddersfield
Dr	Ann	Davies	Department of Psychology
Mr	Rob	Davis	Health @ Work
Mr	Roger	Dollery	West Mercia Constabulary
Miss	Emma	Donaldson	E.J.D Associates
Mr	Andy	Downes	Potentiality
Dr	Christine	Doyle	University of East London
Mr	Paul	Dudley	Hertfordshire County Council
Mr	Michael	Emmott	Chartered Institute of Personnel And Development
Mr	Colin	Ettinger	Kirklees Solicitors
Dr	Anne	Finn	BMI Health Services Ltd
Mr	Mike	Fisher	Head of HR Operations
Dr	Colin	Fuller	The Scarman Centre
Dr	Sabir	Giga	University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology
Ms	Ginny	Giles	Occupational Health
Dr	Catherine	Gill	Marsh UK Ltd
Dr	Nick	Glozier	Occupational Health Department
Dr	Richard	Graveling	Head of Human Sciences
Dr	Roger	Haslam	Health and Safety Ergonomics Unit, Department of Human Sciences
Mr	Jonathan	Hearn	DLA Group
Dr	Richard	Heron	Astra Zeneca
Dr	Marilyn	Hobbs	Routeone Performance Management
Mr	Steve	Hodder	Assistant Director
Dr	Helge	Hoel	Manchester School of Management
Mr	Richard	Hooper	

Ms	Jane	Huntley	Head of Employment and Health
Ms	Nola	Ishmael	Department of Health
Mr	Paul	Johnson	
Ms	Helen	Jones	Clinical Psychologist
Ms	Kath	Jones	Business Manager
Mr	Richard	Jones	Institution of Occupational Safety and Health
Dr	Charles	Kavanagh	Health and Work
Mr	Brian	Kazer	British Occupational Health Research Foundation
Mr	Sam	Kerrison	Redbridge Borough Council
Ms	Rebecca	Lancaster	ENTEC
Ms	Michelle	Lennon	Occupational Health Manager
Ms	Paula	Lewis	Creative Partnerships, Arts Council England
Mr	Paul	Litchfield	
Mr	Gordon	Mackenzie	AOB Solutions
Mr	Paul	Madgwick	Bloor Homes
Mr	Michael	Mead	AOB Solutions
Mr	Tom	Mellish	Health and Safety Policy Officer
Dr	Doreen	Miller	Miller Health Management
Mr	Mathew	Mills	AOB Solutions
Ms	Anne	Moore	Assistant Director - Residences
Dr	Rachel	Mulholland	Institute of Occupational Medicine
Mr	Jim	Murray	Health and Safety Manager
Dr	Nick	Niven-Jenkins	Department of Work and Pensions
Ms	Miriam	O'Connor	Health Education Board for Scotland
Dr	Keith	Palmer	MRC Environmental Epidemiology Unit
Dr	Malcolm	Patterson	Institute of Work Psychology
Dr	Simon	Pickvance	Sheffield occupational health AS
Mr	Ed	Radkiewicz	Chief Executive, Business Health
Ms	Caroline	Raymond	Stress In Practice/IOSH
Mr	Tony	Rees	Hampshire County Council
Ms	Jo	Rick	Institute of employment studies
Mr	Hugh	Robertson	UNISON
Mr	Ivan	Robertson	Robertson Cooper
Dr	Doug	Russell	Health and Safety Officer
Mr	Reg	Sell	(former OHAC member)
Mr	Brian	Shepherdson	Health, Safety and Security Manager
Dr	Delia	Skan	HSE Northern Ireland
Professor	Andy	Smith	School of Psychology
Ms	Christine	Sprigg	Institute of Work Psychology
Ms	Ann	Spur	HM Prison Service
Dr	Anne	Spurgeon	The Institute of Occupational Health
Professor	Stephen	Stansfeld	Queen Mary, University of London
Ms	Brenda	Stephens	Health Promotion Authority for Wales
Ms	Adrianna	Summers	Anderson Summers
Ms	Alison	Telfer	Royal College of Nursing

Mr	Mike	Wagland	J&H Marsh and McLennan (UK)
Mr	Steve	Walter	Engineering Employers Federation
Professor	Peter	Warr	Institute of Work Psychology
Dr	Claire	Welsh	Equilibrium Consulting
Ms	Anne	Wilkinson	AOB Solutions
Mr	Paul	Witchfield	Kirklees Solicitors
Professor	Stephen	Wood	Institute of Work Psychology, University of Sheffield
Ms	Julie	Wooton	Cedar plc

OVERVIEW OF MANAGEMENT STANDARDS PILOT STUDY

The pilot study commenced in April 2003. Twenty-four organisations agreed to take part and evaluation began in December 2003. Currently we are only able to provide an overview of the pilot study, however, the evaluation will be completed and a summary included in the draft consultation document. The full evaluation report will be published as an HSL research report to coincide with the planned launch of the public consultation exercise around May 2004.

Twenty-two organisations actually piloted the HSE Stress Management Standards, including HSE itself. Feedback was collected from 21 of the pilot organisations (one had not piloted our approach but gave feedback on their existing work). Two of the pilot organisations will provide feedback in January. Feedback was collected by means of e-mailed questionnaires and telephone interviews

Pilot organisations included both public and private organisations, including government departments, local councils, engineering firms and financial / insurance companies (see attached list of pilot organisations). Participants in the pilot included supervisors, managers, factory operatives, administrative staff, teachers, lecturers, council employees and policemen.

The total number of employees participating in the pilot exercise was in excess of 13,000, ranging from 26 in one organisation to 6,000 in another (where the organisation made use of its own employee survey data).

The individual pilot organisations each took very different approaches in selecting the parts of their organisations to take part in the pilots. One selected parts of the organisation to give a "diagonal slice", some selected a part of the organisation that represented "a self-contained unit", while two smaller organisations included everyone in the organisation. One of these organisations noted that they did not wish to leave any part out "to prevent suspicion".

When asked about the factors which were significant in securing senior management commitment, virtually all of the pilot organisations cited an "existing commitment to tackle work-stress" in their organisation and "the desire to be recognised as a good employer" as significant factors. Many of them went on to cite:

- HSE's reputation / regulatory role;
- The simplicity of the draft standards;
- The package of risk assessment tools provided for pilot organisations.

The offer of support from HSE / ACAS was a significant factor for approximately half of the group. Most organisations stated that "information on costs and benefits" was not a significant factor.

Seventeen of the pilot organisations made use of the HSE 'first pass' and/or 'second pass' filter tools to assess their organisation's performance against the Management Standards. Several of them made use of equivalent questions in their own in-house staff survey as substitutes for the HSE 'first pass' question sets. HSE helped several organisations to adapt the tools to meet their specific requirements and several other organisations adapted the HSE tools themselves (eg by developing electronic versions of the questionnaires).

Most considered that the management standards approach was consistent with or integrated well with their existing HR policies and risk assessment processes. Others were reviewing their current policies in the light of the management standards work.

When asked if the percentage statement in the Management Standards was helpful in deciding whether the state to be achieved had been met, most pilot organisations considered that it was, though there were significant criticisms. For example, there was criticism of the lower level percentages (65%) for three of the stressor areas, in particular criticisms from trade unions and others of the lower percentage for relationships.

Most pilot organisations reported that the it was easy to know whether their organisation met the states to be achieved and most reported finding no particular difficulties in interpreting them within the context of their organisation. However, some raised caveats about the reliability of the process and the accuracy of the tools in identifying key risk areas.

Few barriers or concerns were reported around ensuring employee involvement in the process. While some reported a relatively low response rate to questionnaires and invitations to attend focus groups, others reported high response rates (95% in one case) and groups of employees volunteering to take part in the pilot exercise.

Most of the pilot organisations said that they had involved employees and many reported involving trade unions in the process. Some had encountered initial reservations on the part of trade unions, though these had subsequently been resolved. Most reported that those consulted were satisfied with the process or, at least, had not raised any major issues. While only 2 organisations reported that they had made use of ACAS support, another found the offer of such support very welcome.

While some organisations had already conducted focus groups, and had identified interventions and developed action plans, a significant number of the pilot organisations were at earlier stage of the process. Several were currently running focus groups or had plans to run them in the near future. Feedback on these will be collected in early 2004.

One pilot organisation who had reached the stage of using focus groups to identify interventions noted that many of the interventions were not particular 'stress' interventions, as commonly envisaged, but rather concerned with

undoing some of the blockages that meant they could get on and do some of the work faster.

Many organisations were not yet in a position to estimate the costs of the pilot process. Some emphasised that they would not expect the costs to be very great as they had made use of the existing data in their in-house staff survey for the first pass filter.

In summing up, most of the organisations considered that the management standards had been helpful to them and rated them as 7 or 8 out of 10 in terms of how helpful they had been to them.

Specific quotes

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