

Stress At Work

Manager's Conversation Guide



Worcestershire
Acute Hospitals
NHS Trust



Manager's Conversation Guide for preventing work-related stress

This guide has been developed to help managers and others hold initial conversations with employees.

This may be as part of a Wellbeing Conversation where stress has been identified as a potential risk or following an employee completing a 'Stress at Work' self-assessment.

It can be used to further explore issues that have been raised and to consider what support is available.

Starting a conversation is an important step towards preventing work-related stress.

The guide looks at six conversations around six different themes which may cause work-related stress; **demand, control, support, role, relationships and change.**

It also considers a seventh theme: **pressures outside of work.**

NEXT STEPS

Once you have had a conversation with your employee, it is important that you discuss and agree timescaled actions which are then revisited regularly. You should also support the employee to access available support.

DEMAND

(e.g. workload, working patterns and work environment)

How achievable does your workload feel?

How clear are you on what is and isn't a priority?

How often do you have conflicting priorities and struggle with your workload?

Do you have the necessary skills, knowledge, and experience to carry out the main parts of your role?

What's already in place to support you?

What more can be done?

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Wellbeing Conversation ▶ Revisit personal objectives using PDR Policy and Support Pack ▶ Ensure there are regular 1-2-1's where workload is discussed and agreed ▶ Team Meetings – where priorities for the team are discussed/agreed ▶ Team Huddles – Where the priorities for the day are agreed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Encourage and allow regular breaks ▶ Consider how flexible working may provide balance to employee's lives ▶ Ensure you understand the team's and individual's workloads ▶ Provide relevant timely training ▶ Take steps to reduce unwanted distractions and unnecessary meetings |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Action	By Whom	By When

CONTROL

(e.g. amount of influence over how work is done)

How involved do you feel in how decisions about your job are made?

Are your skills being used effectively?

Do you feel listened to? How could this be improved?

How much of a say do you have in how your work is organised and carried out?

What's already in place to support you?

What more can be done?

- ▶ More structured, regular communication
- ▶ Greater trust and autonomy
- ▶ Discuss training needs
- ▶ Talk about how decisions are made and how you may be able to contribute

- ▶ Explore the Health & Wellbeing Pin-Wheel
- ▶ Look at [Occupational Health Support](#)
- ▶ Look at personal development and training plans, including continuous professional development
- ▶ Consider training programmes such as [Manager Essentials](#), [7 Habits](#), [6 Critical Practices](#)

Action	By Whom	By When

SUPPORT

(e.g. the resources, support and encouragement given to you)

Does your manager give you enough supportive encouragement and feedback on the work you do?

Do you feel you can rely on your manager to help you with a work problem?

Do you feel you can talk to your manager about something that upsets or annoys you at work?

Do you feel your manager supports you through any emotionally demanding work?

Do you feel your colleagues will help you if work becomes difficult?

Do you get the help and support you need from your colleagues?

Do you get the respect at work you deserve from your colleagues?

Are your colleagues willing to listen to your work-related problems?

Is the organisation a positive place to work?

What's already in place to support you?

What more can be done?

- ▶ Ensure that team members are aware of support available in the Trust and how to access it
- ▶ Hold regular 1-2-1 meetings where workload is discussed and feedback provided
- ▶ Maintain an open and transparent management style
- ▶ Offer regular [Wellbeing Conversations](#) /actively listen to concerns affecting mental health
- ▶ Offer debriefing to team members - especially following traumatic incidents

- ▶ Hold regular team meetings and sharing of priorities for the day/week
- ▶ Encourage and develop team communications and responsibilities
- ▶ Revisit [Behavioural Charter](#) and expected behaviours within the team
- ▶ Hold regular team meetings where work challenges are discussed and explored as a team

Action	By Whom	By When

ROLE

(e.g. understanding the purpose of your job and your responsibilities)

How clear are you on what your responsibilities and objectives are?

Do you understand how your work is structured and how this feeds into organisational objectives?

Do you know who is doing what, why and when and how you contribute?

What's already in place to support you?

RELATIONSHIPS

(e.g. team working, respect and behaviour)

Are relationships strained at work?

Have you been subject to or witnessed, bullying, harassment, unfair treatment or exclusion?

Do you feel open and honest communication is encouraged?

Do you know how to access support if you experience unacceptable behaviour?

What's already in place to support you?

CHANGE

(e.g. informed and consulted about changes at work that may impact on you)

Do you feel that you are consulted about changes that will affect you?

Do you feel these changes are well explained to you?

How well does the organisation handle change?

How involved are you in planning changes?

What's already in place to support you?

What more can be done?

- ▶ Consultation and engagement exercises
- ▶ Multi-level, timely, two-way communication

- ▶ Regular 1-2-1 and team meetings
- ▶ Consider training programmes such as [Manager Essentials, 7 Habits, 6 Critical Practices](#)

Action	By Whom	By When

PRESSURES OUTSIDE OF WORK

(e.g. family circumstances, health or financial worries)

Do you feel that your work-life balance is manageable?

Are there any demands outside of work that you are struggling with?

Are relationships strained outside of work?

Do you feel you have people you can speak to outside of work when there is something bothering you?

Is there anything outside of work that is causing you any pressure or stress?

Are there any situations outside of work that can trigger stress or poor mental health?

Are you accessing or do you need to access any support outside of work?

Do you know how to access support outside of work if you need it?

Is there anything that can be done at work to help you maintain a better work-life balance?

What's already in place to support you?

What more can be done?

- ▶ Consider how flexible working may provide balance to employee's lives
- ▶ Offer regular [Wellbeing Conversations](#) /actively listen to concerns affecting mental health
- ▶ Complete a Personal Wellbeing Action Plan and review regularly
- ▶ Explore the Health & Wellbeing pinwheel, in particular services offered by H&W such as the [Staff Psychological Wellbeing Service](#)

- ▶ Consider [NOSS Counselling](#) support that can be accessed 24/7 outside of work
- ▶ Explore wellbeing apps that can be easily accessed outside of work
- ▶ Consider accessing support outside of work e.g. bereavement services, SANDS, Cranstoun Addiction Support, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors and Women's Aid.

Action	By Whom	By When