

Occupational Health and Safety Certificate Level 3

Final Project
Stress within my Company



Author

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Report on Stress Levels within my Company

1. Terms of Reference

At the request of the TUC tutor, Penny Gower, a report on a workplace issue I have dealt with was to be drawn up. Recommendations were to be made regards the report's findings. I have chosen to report back on "Stress within my Company".

2. Background

- 2.1 During several discussions with employees across the works, it became apparent that the level of sickness absence occurrences had risen within my company over 12 to 18 months
- 2.2 The majority of longer term absences appeared to be due to stress or stress related illness. i.e. depression, anxiety, hypertension etc.
- 2.3 Senior management appeared oblivious to this fact.
- 2.4 Occupational Health Department were in a state of flux, going from the death of the works Doctor, retiral of Occupational Health Nurse and the dismissal of the practice nurse to hiring an agency to handle occupational health, twice.
- 2.5 My company did have a stress policy in place.

3. Procedure

Information was obtained from the following resources

- 3.1 Local area (feedback from employees), Branch meetings.
- 3.2 Return to work interviews with absent employees.
- 3.3 Discreet conversations with managers.
- 3.4 Employee survey (Management Standards Tool) in one department (30 employees).
- 3.5 HSE website.
- 3.6 European Agency for Safety and Health at Work.

4. Findings

- 4.1 Feedback from employees proved to be invaluable in the sense that all feedback was first hand as most employees had visited absentee employees at home. All showed concern for absentees.
- 4.2 Most employees that had returned to work were only too happy to discuss their individual cases on a one to one basis and allow me to take notes to record details of their absence. Names were not recorded in any of these cases. Anonymity was assured unless otherwise requested by employees interviewed.
- 4.3 Some managers were happy to discuss individual case histories, prior to employees returning to work as they were concerned also for the employees wellbeing. Other managers refused to see or admit there was a problem within the different departments.
- 4.4 HSE "Management Standards Tool" proved an effective method to obtain a snapshot of employee stress levels in my department.
Appendix 1
- 4.5 Research paper from European Agency for Safety and Health at Work on Work Related Stress gathered information and findings from many European Union Countries into report format
- 4.6 Occupational Health Department did not at the time of compiling this report contribute to the findings as there was no Occupational Health Department due to extenuating circumstances. This has since changed due to an Occupational Health agency being employed to look after the Occupational Health Department.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Strengths

- 5.1.1 Strong sense of concern for fellow employees wellbeing from their team members.
- 5.1.2 Returning employees willingness to discuss individual case on one to one basis, allowing confidential records to be kept by report author.
- 5.1.3 Most managers of absentee employees showed concern for their

health and wellbeing.

- 5.1.4 The management Standards Tool is a tried and tested method to define stressors within the workplace recommended by many employers and health institutions.
- 5.1.5 The report from the European Agency deals with the research evidence regarding the assessment and management of stress at the workplace.
- 5.1.6 New Occupational Health Department have given renewed support to employees and employee representatives in dealing with stress and stress related illness.

5.2 Weaknesses

- 5.2.1 Evidence appeared to show that my company's stress policy was only paying lip service to the problem.
- 5.2.2 Some management refused to admit that there was a problem on site. This was highlighted by the response from higher management to the original statement that stress was a problem onsite.
- 5.2.3 Management Standards Tool questionnaire was not in electronic format, therefore had to conduct survey using paper copies and enter information manually into programme.
- 5.2.4 Some employees refusing to acknowledge that there was a problem in their workplace. This was mainly down to pride and eventually resulted in absenteeism.
- 5.2.5 The report from the European Agency is a large document, 171 pages, and rather in depth even though it states that "the research is summarised in this report".
- 5.2.6 Occupational Health Department not being operational for an extended period of time, approximately 10 months to one year.

6. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- 6.1 The author of this report publishes survey findings to new Occupational Health Department, to highlight the problems around the works. Now complete.
- 6.2 Communicate the dangers of not reporting stressors by employees to either Occupational Health Department or first line managers and the possible outcomes regards ill health and absenteeism due to stress and stress related illnesses. Now complete.
- 6.3 Highlight to senior management via Joint Consultation Committee the problem that exists in the company. Now complete.
- 6.4 Gain senior management's commitment to issue the HSE's Management Standards Tool survey to all employees. Now complete.
- 6.5 Input data into Management Standards programme in order to obtain full picture on stress levels within the Company. In progress.
- 6.6 Communicate findings and results to all employees.
- 6.7 Define next steps in association with Occupational Health Department in line with Management Standards Tool recommendations.
- 6.8 Inform HSE Inspectors of findings and projected outcomes.
- 6.9 Gain senior management's support to continue with stress survey on an annual basis to measure situation across the works.
- 6.10 Human Resources Department update Company Stress Policy and review annually in line with stress survey findings.

Signed..... Date.....

Summary of Results

Appendix 1.

Data Set: Psychosocial Working Conditions in Britain in 2004

	Your Results	Suggested Interim Target	Suggested Longer Term Target
Demands	2.59	3.13	4.25
Control	2.59	3.17	4.33
Managers' Support	2.40	3.24	4.60
Peer Support	3.15	3.75	4.75
Relationships	3.11	3.75	4.75
Role	3.14	4.60	5.00
Change	2.32	3.00	4.00

Key

- Doing very well - need to maintain performance
Represents those at, above or close to the 90th percentile†
- Good, but need for improvement
Represents those better than average but not yet at, above or close to the 80th percentile†
- Clear need for improvement
Represents those likely to be below average but not below the 20th percentile†
- Urgent action needed
Represents those below the 20th percentile†
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