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Mental Well-being at Work

At Home

Stress is the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them. The workplace stressors that impact our lives are well known.

This information sheet considers how these stressors apply to the challenges of working from home and what steps can be taken to reduce the impact of work-related stress.

What are the risk factors linked to workplace stress?

Our workload, work patterns and work environment all contribute to the **demands** placed upon us at work. When working from home, these factors may vary considerably from day to day and throughout the working day.
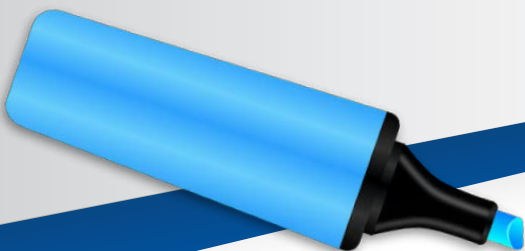
Having a say over how we do our work is important and it's no different when working from home. There may be a greater expectation on the home worker to take increasing levels of **control** over the work they do. This might initially prove challenging.

We all value support from our colleagues and managers. When working from home, support networks may seem less available. Colleagues should be assured that **support** is still available when it's needed most.

Even when working from home, we can still be subjected to unacceptable behaviours. Keeping effective lines of communication open is key to ensure strong **relationships** are maintained and staffing problems are dealt with promptly.

Regular time away from colleagues means that understanding our **role** and responsibilities is vital if we are to be clear as to what is expected of us. Our role may become even less clear with competing demands for our time at home.

Organisational **change** whether large or small impacts us all wherever we might be working. Managers have an important role to play in ensuring staff engagement during periods of change.

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Emotional well-being

Look out for changes in your behaviours. Talk to others. Ensure you get enough rest

Be aware of changes in staff mood or demeanour and be open to talking with them about any problems

Work environment

Ensure your working environment is comfortable and follows relevant workstation guidelines

Provide staff with advice on completing their own basic workstation assessment

Physical health

Take exercise and eat healthy foods in line with government guidelines

Encourage time for healthy practice, regular breaks away from screens, lunch breaks etc

Switching off

Don't feel the need to 'over compensate' by working beyond your normal office hours

Set realistic targets and reassure staff they don't need to 'prove how hard they are working'

Work demands

Consider certain tasks may be more challenging

Certain tasks may require additional support

Staying connected

Use available technology e.g. video conference calls, groups chats, e-mail, telephone etc.

Upskill staff on using the available technologies for communication in the workplace

Increased responsibility

Working from home may create an increase in your level of responsibility and decision making

Maintain contact with staff and provide direction where needed

Mental well-being

Take time to be mindful of your surroundings including your thoughts, feelings and the world around you

Signpost staff to other support networks if required

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Daily routine

Structure your day to help create boundaries around work, home and leisure time

Work with staff to help create a structure around the working day

Work-life balance

Consider the best work-life balance for your circumstances

Understand the importance of family networks and encourage a positive work-life balance

Managing change

Keep up to date with changes happening in work - keep in touch with colleagues

Ensure staff are kept informed of any news, changes, opportunities etc.

Support networks

Identify what support you need from your manager/peers to work well

Communicate regularly with staff to ensure they receive the support needed

SOURCES OF FURTHER ADVICE

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HSENI has a range of other guidance on work-related stress https://www.hseni.gov.uk/stress

HSC Public Health Agency

The Public Health Agency provide five directories that list the names, numbers and web addresses (where applicable) of organisations within each Trust area that offer services to help improve mental health and emotional well-being - https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/directory-services-help-improve-mental-health-and-emotional-wellbeing

HSE Health & Safety Executive

The Health and Safety Executive (GB) provides advice on protecting workers at home, including guidance on workstation assessment - https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/home.htm

Labour Relations agency

Bullying and harassment: www.lra.org.uk/resolving-problems/types-problems/bullying-and-harassment

here 2 help app

Here to help is a locally developed resource to signpost individuals to a range of services and support for anyone in crisis - https://www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk/resident/healthandwellbeing/here2help

Lifeline

No matter what your age or where you live in Northern Ireland, if you are or someone you know is in distress or despair, Lifeline is there to help.

Telephone: 0808 808 8000
(24 hours a day, free to call)

www.lifelinehelpline.info

MINDING your HEAD .info

Minding your head is an online mental health resource run by the Public Health Agency

www.mindingyourhead.info

For further information please contact a member of HSENI's Mental Well-being at Work Advisory Service at **stress@hseni.gov.uk** or call **0800 032 0121**

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83 Ladas Drive, Belfast, BT6 9FR Northern Ireland

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