

Safety Standard: Stress Management

SS4.5

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Section One - Introduction.

This Standard contains the policy on the Management of Stress in Royal Mail Group. The owner of this standard is the Royal Mail Group Head of Safety. The Health and Safety Forum and the Head of Group Personnel approved the original standard in November 2002. It will be reviewed annually. A Working Group involving representatives from operational business units and trade unions have reviewed and updated the approach during 2004.

This document and its associated appendices have been designed as a policy and practical guide for all Business Units and managers in Royal Mail Group regarding stress so that there is a greater degree of clarity over what the Business and individual managers need to do, and what support and advisory services are available to help them meet their responsibilities. The CWU and CMA have been consulted during the preparation of this document and support the principles outlined.

Section Two – Policy on the Management of Stress in Royal Mail Group

Business Units and managers need to be aware of the following statements that encapsulate the Royal Mail Group policy on stress:

2.1 Our employees are essential to the success of Royal Mail Group. **Employees who suffer stress may not perform effectively or efficiently whilst at work. This means that individual performance and team performance may be reduced, with eventual effects on the quality of service.**

2.2 Royal Mail Group's approach is based on three elements to ensure comprehensive management and control of workplace stress. These consist of (i) a proactive approach to identify root causes, (ii) a responsive approach to identify those with issues and provide support and (iii) a rehabilitative approach to care for those recovering.

2.3 Royal Mail Group recognises that business objectives are demanding and, therefore, managers need to be aware of the psychological effects of business decisions. Wherever reasonable and practicable, **we will seek to minimise adverse psychological effects on the individual due to work.** Managers will also attempt to promptly recognise individuals who are adversely affected by organisational change/growth (or who are vulnerable individuals due to any other reason) and provide practical support for them.

2.4 Royal Mail Group will assist (as far as is reasonably practicable) individuals who are suffering from stress related ill health to achieve an effective recovery wherever this is possible.

Section Three – Guidance on the Implementation of the Policy

3.1. Introduction

Stress is not an illness itself, but a response to a situation, which may have physical and psychological effects. In the short-term the effects are mainly physical (e.g. increased heart beat, dry mouth, increased perspiration) and may be generally beneficial as initially this may give higher performance. By way of example, before making an important presentation, the body's reaction to stress may lead to increased concentration and energy.

However, in the long-term there may be negative effects (e.g. headaches, high blood pressure, ulcers, skin conditions, sleep disturbance, lower immune system), which can result in depression or anxiety.

The causes of stress can be at home, as well as at work, such as family bereavements, relationship breakdown, debt and crime. Although these occur outside the workplace they may have a negative impact upon performance, given their longer-term effect. Coming on top of existing pressure at work they can deplete the individual's capacity to cope and, without support, can lead to lower performance at work and sick-absence. An updated guidance leaflet (Appendix 4) contains a more comprehensive list and description of the causes and effects of stress.

The Health & Safety Executive in its guidance material defines work-related stress as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them'. It exists where people **perceive** they cannot cope with what is being asked of them at work.

Therefore, although stress (or work-related stress) is not a medical condition, the conditions resulting from it are recognised medical problems. Examples include depression, acute anxiety, and post trauma stress.

It is important to recognise that the majority of people with either stress related or other mental health problems are able to continue to work successfully. Royal Mail Group's approach is to ensure a positive, supportive and enabling attitude towards all employees with mental health problems.

3.2 The Management Process – Business and Central Function Level

3.2.1 Stress Risk Assessment. Each Business and Central Function must complete form STRA1 at Appendix 1 in the fourth quarter of each year 2002/3 and forward a copy to the Head of Safety and the Head of Health, with details of actions planned to minimise any stress risks which have been identified. Actions will be reviewed by the P&OD Executive.

3.2.2 The Risk Assessment form uses a scoring mechanism to determine the level of control of stress in the Business Unit. Scores of 0 at individual question level indicates that the controls are in place and working. If the controls are not in place or not working the score is as indicated on the column. The scores for each question should be totalled to indicate a total score. A total score of 0 to 150 is deemed to indicate a low level of risk from work-related stressors and scores in this range are acceptable. Controls should be maintained at this level and monitored throughout the year. Scores of 150 and above indicate there is a potential issue with some controls, either not in place or not working. An action plan must be drawn up, with details of the new and revised controls and a timescale for implementation. A nominated Director in the Business or Central Function will be responsible for carrying out the risk assessment and managing the action plan to completion. This action plan will accompany the Risk Assessment return as above.

3.2.3 Effective risk assessment and action planning will involve input from trade union safety representatives, and colleagues working in the Business or Central Function concerned. Employee Health Services and other specialists may also be involved.

3.2.4 Communication of the results of the high-level risk assessment and associated action plan is essential in this process. Within each Business and Central Function, local methods, such as team briefings, newsletters, Web and Lotus Notes based communication applications, should all be considered and used as appropriate.

3.2.5 Risk assessments must be reviewed annually, and more frequently if significant changes are made to the workplace or work organisation.

3.3. The Management Process – Line Manager level

3.3.1 Line managers have a responsibility to ensure that the work and working environment within their team does not lead to the experience of stress as far as is reasonably practicable. They have an important role in recognising the signs and symptoms of stress and discussing these issues with an employee in a supportive manner to see whether further support can be provided.

3.3.2 A leaflet has been produced and is available from the EHS Helpline and is useful in helping managers and employees to be aware of stress and highlight what level of support is available (i.e. the Connect Employee Assistance confidential Helpline).

3.3.3 In summary: Line Managers should –

- **Involve staff and trade union representatives in the planning and organising of duties.**
- Be proactive in raising concerns with the individual if there are signs of stress.
- Spend time in a confidential environment to clarify the individual's issues (e.g. are they work-related or personal?).
- Respond to an individual's request for personal help (e.g. giving the Connect helpline number and EHS leaflet).
- Make a management referral to EHS, if the individual's stress is affecting their performance/ attendance and for a report outlining actions that can be taken as a manager.
- Follow through on agreed actions to support the individual and what they will do themselves – the most effective approach is to talk to the individual, understand problems and work out solutions on the basis of the individual's capabilities.
- Monitor the individual's behaviour over time to establish that the individual is receiving support and that the issues originally highlighted have been addressed.
- Draw up an agreed plan with the individual, involving and consulting the trade union's safety representative with their consent.

'Managing stress in the workplace – a manager's guide' has been reproduced as an Appendix to this Standard and must be referred to by all line managers as necessary.

3.4 Summary

This standard is designed to ensure the Royal Mail Group has controls in place to combat work related stress.

Business and Central Function risk assessments and associated action plans will ensure high-level controls are in place and working. Line manager guidance and the Contact Helpline will ensure appropriate local control, and that interventions can be implemented.

Section 4 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Form STRA1 Risk Assessment and Guidance

Appendix 2 – Managing stress in the workplace – a manager’s guide

Appendix 3 – Royal Mail Group Framework – Managing Workplace Stress

Appendix 4 – Stress leaflet – How we manage work related stress

Appendix 1. Form STRA1 and Guidance

Stress Risk Assessment Guidance

1. Work related stress

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 require sufficient measures to be taken to protect employees who are vulnerable to work related stress. This means that risk assessments must be carried out to ensure that certain vulnerable groups or individuals are not exposed to greater or disproportionate levels of risk.

Undertaking a risk assessment for work related stress is more complicated than for physical hazards, but it involves the same basic principles and process.

This work related stress risk assessment is designed to establish whether the existing control measures preventing harm are sufficient or if more should be done. Completing a risk assessment will not in itself reduce work related stress. However the resulting actions should do so. Managers and staff should have stress awareness training to ensure appropriate actions can be taken.

Stress is a very complex issue and therefore it is helpful to formulate an overall picture by considering data from several sources and not relying on a single source.

There are seven broad categories of risk factors for work related stress: culture; demands; control; relationships; change; role; and support, training and factors unique to the individual. A good working description of these categories is:

- **CULTURE** - of the organisation and how it approaches work related stress
- **DEMANDS** - such as workload and exposure to physical hazards
- **CONTROL** - how much say the person has in the way they do their work
- **RELATIONSHIPS** - covering issues such as bullying and harassment
- **CHANGE** - how organisational change is managed and communicated in the organisation
- **ROLE** - whether the individual understands their role in the organisation; and whether the organisation ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles
- **SUPPORT, TRAINING and FACTORS UNIQUE TO THE INDIVIDUAL:**
 - **Support** - from peers and line management
 - **Training** - for the person to be able to undertake the core functions of the job
 - **Factors unique to the individual** - catering for individual differences

2. Work related Stress Risk Assessment Form (FORM STRA1)

Before completing a work related stress risk assessment please read the whole of this section.

You may find it helpful to look at **FORM STRA1** whilst reading through the STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE.

3. Step by step guide

Fill in the administrative section at the top of the form.

Answer the questions on the form by entering **Yes**, **No** or **N/A** against each question.

If the answer to a question is **YES**:

- Enter **YES** in column 3

If the answer to a question is **NO** or **N/A**:

- Enter **NO** or **N/A** in either column 4 or 5 respectively

So, for each question you reply 'No' to, you obtain a score, you do not score for YES or N/A.

For all questions that have the answer - **NO**, use column 7, **ACTION(S) NECESSARY FOR IMPROVEMENT**, to state what remedial action you are going to take (*this is the action needed to change the answer to YES*) to minimise the likelihood of injury and drive the improvement action. Even if the answer is YES, it is useful to put comments in column 7 to explain why/how you made it a YES.

Once the risk assessment form is completed, look at the overall score and the level of risk (Low/Medium/High). The scores total automatically, as you enter the correct answer against the appropriate question. If the risk is assessed as Medium or High, take the necessary actions to reduce the level to Low.

4. Work related stress Scores and Risk Levels

Assessed areas will be given a score ranging from 0 - 500, with the aim being to obtain a **LOW SCORE**.

The level of risk, **LOW**, **MEDIUM** or **HIGH**, is then assigned corresponding to the score achieved in the assessment. The higher the score - the higher the level of risk, and consequently the greater the likelihood of work related stress. The levels of risk and action required are as follows:

LEVEL OF RISK	SCORE	ACTION REQUIRED
LOW	0 - 150	Some risk acceptable, ensure that conditions do not change. Control: Regular information/training
MEDIUM	155 - 350	Take any reasonably practicable steps to limit the likelihood of injury and identify areas for improvement to reduce the level of risk. Control: Training, introduction of further management processes
HIGH	355 - 500	Priority action needed to be taken to identify areas for improvement that will immediately reduce the risk of injury to lowest possible level. Control: Foolproof precautions, considerable expenditure, intensive training.

This means that actions must be taken to reduce the risk to the lowest level of risk, so far as is reasonably practicable. Within Royal Mail Group, our aim is to reduce the work related stress risk to **LOW**. **NB. This work related stress Risk Assessment is also available as an Excel file from the Web site.**

Stress Risk Assessment

FORM STRA 1

Page 1 of 4

BUSINESS / CENTRAL FUNCTION:

**NAME/JOB TITLE
OF ASSESSOR:**

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Answer the questions below by entering Yes, No or N/A against each question.

If the answer to a question is YES - enter YES in column 3. **A YES response implies**

100% effectiveness and adequacy

If the answer to a question is NO or N/A - enter NO or N/A in either column 4 or 5 respectively.

If the answer to a question is NO, enter in the REQUIRED ACTION column, the action needed to change the answer to YES, so reducing the overall level of risk.

By entering the appropriate answers, the total score and the overall level of risk associated with stress is calculated and displayed automatically.

If the risk is assessed as Medium or High, take the necessary actions to reduce the level to Low. Remember, the aim is to achieve a LOW SCORE.

If the level of risk is Low tick the LOW box, and the Risk Assessment ends.

If the level of risk is Medium or High, list the action(s) to be taken to put in place the necessary risk controls that will drive improvement.

	QUESTION/ FACTOR	YES	NO	N/A	SCORE	ACTION(S) NECESSARY FOR IMPROVEMENT
	CULTURE					
1	Is sick absence reviewed for signs of stress related illness?				20	
2	Is annual leave reviewed by line managers to ensure that employees take their leave entitlements?				10	
3	Are employees discouraged from working excessive hours?				10	
4	Are reports of stress taken seriously and action taken?				30	
5	Are there good communication channels set up so that employees are kept well informed?				10	
6	Is there a feedback process in place for comments and/or complaints?				10	

DEMANDS						ACTION(S) NECESSARY FOR IMPROVEMENT P2 of 4
7	Does the recruitment process correctly match skills, and ability to the job?				10	
8	Is the allocation of work to duties reviewed?				10	
9	Is induction and job change training given and is refresher training available?				10	
10	Are contractual hours agreed on recruitment and aligned to the work required?				10	
11	Do employees understand the reasons for changes in work volumes?				20	
12	Is there a monitoring system for working environment factors? (noise, vibration, ventilation, humidity etc.)				15	
13	Are there adequate resources to do the required work?				15	
14	Is there sufficient, suitable equipment available for all jobs?				15	
CONTROL						ACTION(S) NECESSARY FOR IMPROVEMENT
15	Is a job design process, including evaluation, followed for new jobs?				15	
16	Are the Working Time Regulations complied with and work patterns controlled?				10	
17	Where possible do employees get an opportunity to plan their own work?				10	
18	Is there an element of flexibility in duty allocation and hours of work?				15	
19	Is there a leadership feedback process?				10	
20	Do management and employees get together regularly to make decisions on how work problems should be tackled? (E.g. WTLL)				10	

						ACTION(S) NECESSARY FOR IMPROVEMENT
	RELATIONSHIPS					ACTION(S) NECESSARY FOR IMPROVEMENT
21	Are employees aware of the process for dealing with bullying and harassment in the workplace?				10	
22	Is there a grievance procedure in place?				15	
23	Is the diversity and inclusion policy complied with?				10	
24	Is the attendance procedure used correctly?				10	
25	Has the purpose of the Conduct Code been communicated, is it used correctly and in the timescales set?				15	
26	Are employees aware of the supporting processes to help those with substance abuse issues?				10	
	CHANGE					ACTION(S) NECESSARY FOR IMPROVEMENT
27	Are employees consulted and involved in changes that may affect them?				20	
28	Is 'change' risk assessed in terms of the impact on health and safety?				20	
	ROLE					ACTION(S) NECESSARY FOR IMPROVEMENT
29	Is the appraisal process followed correctly?				10	
30	Is the job evaluation process followed for all new jobs and are there clear job descriptions?				10	
31	Are "one to ones" regularly held?				10	
32	Does the training process ensure that the correct training is available for all jobs?				20	

SUPPORT/TRAINING/OTHER FACTORS				ACTION(S) NECESSARY FOR IMPROVEMENT	
33	Are employees aware of the services of the medical and welfare support teams and encouraged to use them?			15	
34	Is there a process for transfers and/or promotions?			10	
35	Has the process for training and career development been explained to staff?			15	
36	Is there a process for analysing skills and competencies?			10	
37	Has stress awareness information provided to employees?			25	
		0	Out of	500	

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF RISK IS - (see below)

Level of Risk **Score**
 LOW 0 - 150

MEDIUM 155 - 350

HIGH 355 - 500

ACTION(S) NECESSARY FOR IMPROVEMENT

Some risk acceptable, ensure that conditions do not change.

Controls: Regular information/training

Take any reasonably practicable steps to limit the likelihood of injury and identify areas for improvement to reduce the level of risk.

Controls: Training, introduction of further management processes

Priority action needed to be taken to identify areas for improvement that will immediately reduce the risk of injury to lowest possible level.

Controls: Foolproof precautions, considerable expenditure, intensive training.

Appendix 2

Managing stress in the workplace: A manager's guide

This guide has been developed as part of Royal Mail Group's overall approach to managing Workplace Stress as set out in the Stress Framework agreed with the Communications Workers Union and the Communication Managers Association.

It is designed to assist managers in recognising indicators of stress and details how to be proactive and minimise the causes as far as is reasonably practicable. It provides identification criteria and suggests an approach which aims to improve the situation by tackling the issues as well as detailing sources of assistance. This guidance should be read in conjunction with the general Stress leaflet.

What is stress?

The HSE defines stress as "The reaction people have to excessive demands or pressure arising when people try to cope with tasks, responsibilities or other types of pressure connected with their job but find difficulty strain or worry doing so".

Accepting that some stressors are of a personal nature and may be caused by a person's home life or outside interests it can still affect the way they work. Hence if the business can give guidance and assistance by directing individuals to suitable support so that the tension is reduced there are benefits to all parties.

What is the manager's role?

As a manager you have a responsibility to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that action is taken to deal with "stressors" at work. The following will assist in control of this: -

1. Organise your working plans within your control so that they do not put undue demands on the individuals or expose them to hazards. Or identify those who do have control so that they can take action.
2. After setting up the work process a key element will be your ability to recognise the symptoms of stress and discuss these with the individual in a constructive manner.
3. The individual also has a responsibility to advise you if they are feeling stressed, however, they may not recognise the symptoms in themselves and hence a detailed Stress leaflet has been produced and made available to all employees.
4. Undertake an initial informal assessment of the individual to determine what action, if any, is required. Some groups such as night workers or individuals health condition such as pregnancy may have a higher potential. The following identifiers will help in this task.
5. Involve and take input from trade union safety representatives.

What are the identifiers of stress in individuals?

These can be split into Work Performance, Attitude and Behaviour plus Relationships at Work and their components include:

Work Performance

Reduced output or productivity
Increased errors
Poor decision making
Deterioration in planning and control of work

Attitude and behaviour

Loss of motivation and commitment
Erratic or poor timekeeping
Increase in sick absence especially short periods of absence

Relationships at work

Tension and conflict with colleagues
Poor relationships with customers
Increase in Industrial Relations or disciplinary problems

There may be other symptoms that are specific to the individual and are covered in the stress leaflet:

Irritable tension head or neck aches
Tiredness and feeling drained of energy
Sleeping poorly
Poor eating habits
Difficulty relaxing
Increased in drinking alcohol or smoking
Feeling helpless, loss of interest

A Proactive Approach

The key to resolving the situation and help the individual is to respond in a positive way. It is important to prevent symptoms affecting quality of life, job satisfaction and performance. Royal Mail Group is committed to work with its employees and Trade Unions to control stress and prevent harm by managing the risk.

If the manager identifies symptoms of stress in any member of the workforce immediate action must be taken. Each case must be dealt with on its merits and knowledge of your staff will help.

Many employees will respond to support from a manager, particularly where this can be provided in a confidential and supportive manner.

First find out what is causing the stress and either control, reduce or remove it. This could be workload, job design, poor management practice, work relationships including bullying or harassment, and home life.

The individual can be encouraged to obtain support for themselves by contacting Connect Employee Assistance by self referral which is a confidential service covering all aspects including issues from bereavement to substance abuse.

Alternatively the manager can refer the individual to the Connect Support or gain appropriate advice to pass on to the individual by completing a Business Referral form. Early referral is important and managers can seek guidance as to how to handle the situation. All this needs to be done with sensitivity and regard to individual confidentiality.

- Each case will be different and guidance/support needs will vary from individual to individual;
- Ensure that resource skills and training are available if required to meet any identified needs;
- Work with the experts and the individual to resolve any outstanding issues. If required, encourage the individual to use the OHS self-help packs on stress, bereavement, debt etc.
- The individual concerned may wish to have counselling.
- It is important to let the person involved know that all the information will be treated in confidence.
- A consistent approach is required with good two-way communication combined with some flexibility without being unfair to individuals, groups or the business.

The initial assessment

Following the above bullet points will enable the initial informal assessment at local level to be made, which will determine what action, if any, is required. A record of any observations / actions / offers of referral etc plus any discussions should be attached to the individual's records for future reference. These should be marked as "in confidence". Further steps may be necessary but will be dependent upon the circumstances, any improvement or lack of it and advice from the OHS Practitioner. If further information is required this is contained in the Royal Mail Group Framework – Managing Workplace Stress, which is available on the Health & Safety Website.

Useful contacts:-

- Connect Employee Assistance – 0845 7994400 [0800 to 1900 Mon – Fri closed on Bank Holidays].
- Business Referral Form – available on the Personnel Intranet website.
- Bullying and Harassment Helpline – 0800 5874 777 [24hours a day]
- Samaritans - contact on 08457 90 90 90 or via jo@samaritans.org
- Additional information can be found on the Web site

Key Points Summary

- Involve staff and trade union representatives in the planning and organising of duties.
- Be proactive in raising concerns with the individual if there are signs of stress.
- Spend time in a confidential environment to clarify the individual's issues (e.g. are they work-related or personal?).
- Respond to an individual's request for personal help (e.g. giving the Connect helpline number and EHS leaflet).
- Make a management referral to EHS, if the individual's stress is affecting their performance/attendance and for a report outlining actions that can be taken as a manager.
- Follow through on agreed actions to support the individual and what they will do themselves – the most effective approach is to talk to the individual, understand problems and work out solutions on the basis of the individual's capabilities.
- Monitor the individual's behaviour over time to establish that the individual is receiving support and that the issues originally highlighted have been addressed.
- Draw up an agreed plan with the individual, involving and consulting the trade union's safety representative with their consent.

APPENDIX 3

Royal Mail Group Framework – Managing Workplace Stress

Introduction

Royal Mail Group is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its employees. We recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors.

This framework describes the approach adopted throughout Royal Mail Group to identify and control workplace stressors.

Definition of Stress

The Health and Safety Executive define stress as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them”. This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health.

Approach

Royal Mail Group’s approach is based on three elements to ensure comprehensive management and control of workplace stress – a pro-active approach to identify root causes, a responsive approach to identify those with issues and provide support and a rehabilitative approach to care for those recovering.

- Royal Mail Group will identify workplace stressors and conduct risk assessments to enable risks to be documented and controlled. These risk assessments will be regularly reviewed.
- Royal Mail Group will consult with Trade Union Safety Representatives on proposed action relating to the prevention of workplace stress.
- Royal Mail Group will provide training for managers and supervisory staff in good management practices.
- Royal Mail Group will provide confidential counselling for staff affected by stress caused by either work or external factors.
- Royal Mail Group will provide adequate resources to enable managers to implement the company’s agreed stress management strategy.
- Royal Mail Group will audit the deployment and effectiveness of interventions to reduce workplace stress

Royal Mail Group's Stress Management Framework

Royal Mail Group has developed a range of tools to enable workplace stressors to be identified and controlled, these include:

- Review of data available (P&OD database, Have Your Say, Support Service utilisation) to enable trends and hotspots to be identified
- Risk assessments to identify Workplace stressors – to be used as a tool to ensure stressors and control measures are identified. This is deployed at Business Unit level initially. Where problems are known from review of data, a risk assessment is available to be deployed at local level.
- A managers guide informs managers of responsibilities and resources available to identify and control stressors and to support colleagues.
- Awareness / education materials have been developed to inform all staff of the approach and available support resources (these include intranet, leaflet and articles in relevant communication materials)
- Employee support is provided – for direct and confidential access by employees or for line managers to support managing their staff. Specialist Helplines, welfare staff and counsellors are provided, complimented by specialist occupational health resource
- Audit to review deployment of measures and implementation of controls identified

Responsibilities:

Managers

- Conduct and implement recommendations of risks assessments within their jurisdiction.
- Ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.
- Ensure staff are trained to discharge their duties.
- Ensure staff are provided with meaningful developmental opportunities.
- Monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded.
- Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking.
- Monitor holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement.
- Attend training as requested in good management practice and health and safety.
- Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated within their jurisdiction.
- Are vigilant and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work e.g. Bereavement or separation.
- Consult Trade Union Safety Representative.

Occupational Health and Safety Staff

- Provide specialist advice and awareness training on stress.
- Train and support managers in implementing stress risk assessments.
- Support individuals who have been off sick with stress and advise them and their management on a planned return to work.
- Refer to workplace counsellors or specialist agencies as required.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of measures to reduce stress.
- Monitor and inform relevant parties of any changes and developments in the field of stress at work.

People & Organisational Development / Human Resources

- Give guidance to managers.
- Assist in monitoring the effectiveness of measures to address stress by collating sickness absence statistics, survey data and other measures.
- Advise managers and individuals on training requirements.
- Provide continuing support to managers and individuals in a changing environment and encourage referral to occupational workplace counsellors where appropriate.
- Manage the provision of workplace support services

Employees

- Raise issues of concern with your safety representative, line manager, occupational health or helpline.
- Take positive steps to act on advice received or identified actions from risk assessments
- Participate in two way communication sessions (eg WTLL)
- Follow safe systems of work
- Assist in identifying development opportunities, attend training as required
- Support colleagues

Function of Safety Reps

- Safety Representatives are consulted on changes to work practices or work design
- Safety Representatives consult with members on the issue of stress including conducting workplace surveys.

Role of the CSR Forum

- The CSR Forum will perform a pivotal role in ensuring that this approach is successful
- The CSR Forum will oversee monitoring of the approach and develop measures to reduce stress and promote workplace health and safety.

Signed by:

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**Dr Steve Boorman
Director CSR
ROYAL MAIL GROUP**

DATE.....

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**Phil Pinnell
CMA Executive**

DATE.....

.....

**Dave Joyce
CWU
National Health, Safety &
Environment Officer**

DATE.....

APPENDIX 4

STRESS LEAFLET

How we manage work related stress

What is stress?

Stress is defined by the Health and Safety Executive as 'The reaction people have to excessive demands or pressure arising when people try to cope with tasks, responsibilities or other types of pressure connected with their jobs but find difficulty strain or worry doing so'.

The effect of stress

As defined by HSE, stress may have a negative effect on mental or physical well being. It may be associated with such symptoms as:

- Irritable tension, anxiety, head or neck aches
- Poor concentration and worrying a lot
- Tiredness and feeling drained of energy
- Loss of confidence and problems making decisions
- Sleeping poorly
- Poor eating habits
- Difficulty relaxing
- Drinking or smoking more
- Feeling depressed, feeling helpless, inability to cope, loss of interest, low self esteem, feeling isolated
- Inability to take advice/criticism, becoming less co-operative

How we manage stress

Events which cause us stress are often outside our control. However we can learn to respond in a more positive way. It is important to prevent symptoms affecting quality of life, or job satisfaction and performance. Royal Mail Group is committed to work with its employees and the Trade Unions to control stress and prevent harm through a risk management approach

Royal Mail Group's role

- Royal Mail Group will take stress seriously and work to control work place stress
- Royal Mail Group will assess the risks of stress, decide whether enough is being done and monitor the effectiveness of our actions to address stress at work
- Royal Mail Group will provide managers with guidance on how to identify and control workplace stress
- Royal Mail Group will ensure that its policies are implemented fairly
- Royal Mail Group will provide support services through EHS for those suffering the effects of workplace stress

Managers will

- Apply Royal Mail Group policies fairly
- Recognise signs of stress amongst colleagues and their teams, and take supportive action
- Tackle issues such as workload, job design, poor management practice, trauma and work relationships including bullying and harassment by others which may lead to stress
- Use the guidance and support systems to provide help to colleagues as needed
- Seek to ensure that resources skills and training are available to meet identified needs
- Work with Trade Unions and experts to develop best practice approaches

Individuals will

- Ensure that their actions attitudes and behaviour does not cause stress for their colleagues
- Follow good practice approaches whenever possible
- Seek advice or help if they feel themselves to be suffering from stress
- Discuss problems with their line manager at the earliest possible opportunity to see how they can be helped, guided and advised

What support is available?

Speak to your manager about your concerns but if you feel unable to do this contact Connect Employee assistance direct

Connect Employee assistance will offer support both to individuals and to line managers on behalf of individuals. This support includes

- Self help packs on stress (e.g. bereavement, debt, childcare,)
- Information on achieving a work life balance
- Information on sources of information or support
- Stress counselling

Contact your Union representative or Health and Safety Representative for advice

Contact the Bullying and Harassment helpline on 0800 58 74 777

The lines are open 24 hours a day

All calls are answered by a trained adviser who will provide appropriate advice and support whatever the reason for your call.

Connect Employee Assistance can be contacted via the Helpline on 0845 799 4400

Opening times : 8am –7pm Monday – Friday (closed on Bank Holidays).

The Samaritans can also help – their lines are open 24 hours a day - Contact them on **08457 90 90 90** They have an email address at jo@samaritans.org

Confidentiality

All calls to Connect Employee Assistance and the Bullying and Harassment Helpline will be treated confidentially in accordance with the relevant professional and ethical code of conduct.

REMEMBER – stress can affect anybody and we need to look after ourselves and others. Royal Mail Group wants to help.

Section 5 Version Control

Version number	Date	Owner	Authority	
SS4.1	16/09/02	Byron Rodgers	Working Party	Original
SS4.2	1/10/02	Byron Rodgers	CMO	Draft
SS4.3	07/11/02	Byron Rodgers	CMO	Approved
SS4.4	10/9/03	Allan Holt	CMO	Approved
SS4.5	10/11/04	Allan Holt	CGC	Approved