

NEU Guidance for Members, Reps and Local Officers

INTRODUCTION

This document provides support for NEU members, reps, safety reps and local officers in their work related to teacher stress. It addresses: the nature and extent of stress in the education profession; tackling stress at a local level; risk assessment and the HSE management standards.

THE EXTENT OF STAFF STRESS IN EDUCATION

Stress has been described by the HSE as ‘the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them’. Although stress itself is not a disease, it is recognised that excessive or prolonged stress can be a cause of mental and physical illness.

HSE research has found that one in five people – an estimated 5 million workers – is ‘very’ or ‘extremely’ stressed at work, and that stress, anxiety and depression nationally lead to more than 11 and a half million lost working days each year. The International Labour Organisation has estimated that the cost of stress to the British economy amounts to over ten per cent of its Gross National Product (GNP).

Studies into the extent of work-related stress in Britain have consistently found that school staff are amongst the most stressed workers in Britain. HSE statistics for the years 2010/11 – 2016/17 show that education is consistently one of the 3 occupations experiencing the highest levels of work related stress.

These statistics are confirmed by an academic study carried out in 2015 by Sir Cary Cooper of the University of Manchester, who stated that out of approximately 80 occupations he has studied, teachers are in the top three most stressed occupations, alongside the health and uniformed services.

The TUC’s 2016 survey of safety representatives found that stress was the top concern for safety reps in education. Nearly 90% of all safety reps working in the sector cited stress as one of their main workplace health and safety concerns.

Data on occupational suicides published by the Office for National Statistics in March 2017 show that female primary and nursery school teachers had a heightened risk of suicide. Between 2011 and 2015 there were 139 suicides among female teachers and nearly 75% (102) of these were primary or nursery teachers. Although it may not always be possible to demonstrate a direct causal link between the stresses of teaching and such tragedies, evidence suggests that stressors such as Ofsted inspections have been connected to teacher suicides in recent years.

In December 2012, the Guardian found that the number of teachers taking sick leave as a result of stress had increased by 10% over the past four years, with 15 local authorities seeing a 50% rise in stress-related absences, according to statistics released under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act. The FOI request found that 40 out of the 60 authorities who responded saw an increase in the number of teachers taking sick leave arising from stress between the academic years 2008-9 and 2011-12. The sharpest rises were in Tower Hamlets in London (up from 16 to 102 incidents), Oldham (up from 41 to 113) and Walsall (27 to 74).

A survey of teachers in 2013 by financial services provider Teachers' Assurance revealed that stress levels within the profession were affecting the ability of teachers to successfully perform their roles. The organisation found that 76 per cent of teachers believed their stress levels were having repercussions on their health, while 56 per cent said they would definitely be better at their job if they were less stressed. 51 per cent admitted to 'severe' levels of work-related stress, whilst 64 per cent of respondents indicated that the threat of Performance Related Pay had increased their stress levels. Furthermore, the survey found that classroom teachers were more likely to feel the repercussions of stress than those in middle or senior management roles.

In 2018, [research](#) conducted by Leeds Beckett University found that the majority of teachers surveyed (77%) felt that poor teacher mental health was having a detrimental effect on pupils' progress. Ninety-four percent said that their classroom energy levels dropped when they were suffering poor mental health and nearly as many said they were less creative during these times. Of those surveyed, over half said that they had experienced poor mental health.

The human consequences of this excessive stress on teachers are serious and wide-ranging, and can include physical symptoms such as headaches, raised blood pressure, infections, digestive disorders, heart disease or cancer; mental health symptoms such as withdrawal, poor concentration, anxiety, depression, insomnia, 'burn-out' and an increased risk of suicide; and behavioural consequences such as low self-esteem, increased drug or alcohol intake and deteriorating personal relationships leading to family, relationship or career problems.

THE CAUSES OF TEACHER STRESS

Research evidence has shown that the main sources of the current high levels of teacher stress include:

- excessive workload and working hours – often exacerbated by a surfeit of government 'initiatives';
- poor pupil behaviour, which itself is often compounded by issues such as large class sizes;
- pressures of assessment targets and inspections;
- management bullying;
- stress of appraisal and performance related pay;
- the threat or instigation of capability proceedings; and
- lack of professional opportunities.

The 2017 NEU workload survey found that 81% of teachers had considered leaving teaching in the last year because of workload. When asked what the causes of their unsustainable workload demands were, the findings showed that the following reasons were cited the most:

- 74% said pressure to increase pupil test scores / exam grades
- 52% said changes to curriculum / assessment / exams
- 46% said Ofsted, mock inspections, other inspections
- 41% said lack of money and resources in the school
- 33% said demands from school leaders / governors
- 33% said reduction of support staff

WORKLOAD AND WORKING HOURS

Excessive workload and working hours are continually cited by teachers as one of the main causes of their workplace stress; this is supported by a TUC unpaid overtime league table, published in 2017, in which teachers emerged as one of the occupational groups carrying out the largest amount of unpaid overtime in the UK, with 51.8 per cent working an average of 12.1 hours of unpaid overtime each week.

The last DfE survey of teachers' working hours in 2016 showed that all categories of teacher were working more than 50 hours a week with primary classroom teachers working 55.5 hours per week

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on average and secondary teachers doing 53.5 hours per week on average. Primary school teachers with less than six years' experience reported working 18.8 hours overtime each week, two hours extra than more experienced colleagues.

A survey carried out by The Guardian newspaper in 2016 found that 82% teachers said their workload was 'unmanageable' and three quarters reported working between 49 and 65 hours per week. 75% of respondents said workload was having a serious impact on their mental health, and nearly as many (73%) on their physical health.

OFSTED/ESTYN

A survey carried out by the NUT in 2013 found that 90% of teachers felt that an Ofsted inspection had created additional pressure and stress for them. Only seven per cent of respondents felt that inspections supported school improvement, and nearly half believed it did not. 84 per cent identified that Ofsted inspections created additional significant workload.

In addition to the inspection itself, the outcome of an Ofsted/Estyn inspection can also cause stress for teachers, specifically if the school is put into special measures or deemed to 'require improvement'. There is often direct pressure put on school leaders in such situations, and this can have implications for other staff as well. They are likely to be subjected to more regular inspections, and may be put under further pressure by school leaders.

The NEU continues to undertake wide ranging work in pursuit of changes to the current education system which would reduce the unreasonable demands upon members which give rise to stress.

This work includes, in particular: ongoing representations to Government and employers to secure reductions in workload, negotiations to improve conditions of service; continuing work to seek reductions in excessive bureaucracy and working time; campaigning in support of teachers faced with unacceptable pupil behaviour; work to secure a more appropriate Ofsted/Estyn inspection framework; and support and assistance for members facing harassment and bullying in the workplace.

In response to pressure from the NUT, ATL and other teaching Unions, Ofsted released a clarification document in March 2015, detailing what teachers and schools **are not** expected to do in preparation for inspections. This aimed to dispel myths about Ofsted inspections which are contributing to excessive workload for teachers. For instance, the document confirms that teachers are not expected to written evidence of dialogue with pupils in their marking, and that schools are not required to provide individual or previous lesson plans to Ofsted.

The full clarification document is available [online](#) and it is important that all school leaders are aware of it and are adjusting their practices accordingly. Worryingly, a survey carried out with NUT reps in 2015 found that whilst approximately 85% of respondents were aware of the Ofsted guidance, only 5% said that this had had any positive impact on their work-life balance.

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Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 employers have a general duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health of their employees at work. This includes taking steps to make sure they do not suffer stress-related illness as a result of their work. This statutory regime supplements the 'common law' obligations on employers to provide reasonably safe working environments for their employees.

Employers also have a specific duty under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to undertake risk assessments that seek to identify and eliminate or reduce risks to their employees' health, safety and welfare. Stress is one of the risks to health, safety and welfare that must be assessed. Local authorities, governing bodies, multi academy trusts and all other employers of teachers must:

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- consider the risk of stress among their workforce;
- take steps to remove the risk; or
- where removal of the risk is not possible, reduce the risk by any necessary changes in working practices or by introducing appropriate protective or supportive measures.

Employers also have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to the working conditions of teachers suffering from certain stress-related illnesses, such as mental illness. Such reasonable adjustments could include flexible working arrangements, altered hours or reallocating certain tasks for a teacher who was experiencing mental illness. It is important to note that stress itself is not classified as a disability under the Equality Act; rather it is diagnosed mental illness, (e.g. depression, anxiety disorder) that is covered by the act, and such mental illness may have been caused or made worse by workplace stress.

Schools also have a Public Sector Equality Duty as laid out in the Equality Act 2010, and must give due regard to eliminating discrimination and advancing equality of opportunity within the workplace. Disability is one of the 'protected characteristics' covered by the equality act, and teachers experiencing mental illness should not be discriminated because of this. Further information on the Equality Act 2010 can be found on the [website](#) of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights.

THE MANAGEMENT STANDARDS APPROACH

The HSE has developed a 'Management Standards' approach to workplace stress which aims to 'provide a yardstick against which to measure performance in tackling the causes of work-related stress'.

Although the Management Standards are voluntary, the NEU believes they can serve as a useful tool for employers in understanding how to carry out a risk assessment for workplace stress. The Management standards contain six key risk factors - or 'stressors' - which have been identified as causes of work-related stress. These are:

the **demands** of your job;
 the **support** you receive from managers/colleagues;
 your **role in the organisation**;

what **control** you have over your work;
 your **relationships** at work;
change and how it is managed.

Each Standard contains simple statements about good management practice for each of the six stressors, which form a useful guide for carrying out stress audits and stress risk assessments. They also act as a 'benchmark' for organisations to assess how they are performing in relation to the six Standards, and to assist in determining targets for improvement and action plans.

Further information on the Management Standards is available from the [HSE](#). The TUC and HSE has also produced joint [guidance](#) for employers on the Management Standards.

WHAT IS A STRESS AUDIT?

The distinction between risk assessments and stress audits must be clearly established at the outset.

Risk assessment is a specific legal requirement upon employers which is governed by the provisions of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. Employers must by law carry out risk assessments with regard to any work process which poses a potential risk to the health and safety of employees. The regulations require employers to ensure that risk assessments are carried out by "competent persons" who must have appropriate experience, knowledge, support and training. Risk assessments must seek to identify the extent of any risks to health and safety and must also establish measures to remove or reduce those risks.

The provisions of risk assessment apply to the risk of work-related stress in the same way as to any other established health and safety issue. With regard to stress, therefore, employers must not only

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investigate the levels and causes of stress but must also investigate, propose and implement measures to remove or reduce the problems identified. Any purported “stress risk assessment” which does not set out appropriate measures which are then acted on by the employer is not a risk assessment which satisfies the law’s requirements.

“Stress audits” will usually investigate the levels and/or causes of stress but will not necessarily investigate or propose solutions. They may be carried out by employers or trade unions. Where employers conduct “stress audits” which investigate a problem but do not also consider, propose and implement solutions, they will not have satisfied their legal obligations to conduct risk assessments. Trade unions, on the other hand, are free to conduct stress audits which investigate the problem but stop short of identifying such solutions.

Trade union stress audits should not be described as “risk assessments” even where they include recommendations for proposed solutions. Risk assessments are the responsibility of employers. Maintaining this distinction between risk assessments and stress audits is not just a matter of words. Describing work carried out by trade unions as “risk assessments” will lead to continuing confusion about employers’ responsibilities and will make it less likely that employers themselves accept these responsibilities and carry out and implement proper risk assessments.

NEU ADVICE ON UNDERTAKING STRESS AUDITS

Stress audits can examine either or both of two separate areas. They can look at the extent and levels of stress among school staff, measured by means of questions relating to stress indicators; and they can look at the causes of stress, measured by means of questions relating to particular stressors.

Stress audits can be carried out in whichever way is seen as most appropriate at local level. They can be conducted through group discussions within individual schools about stress and its causes. Alternatively, they can be conducted via online surveys across the division or association using a sample of schools or sample of NEU members, or within an individual school. The NEU provides a standardised online stress survey which can be distributed to members locally within a school, or across a division or academy trust. School reps, health and safety reps or local officers can request to use the survey from HQ. Further details on the survey are available in the guidance document available from the NEU Health and Safety Unit. Benefits of online surveys include that the responses can remain anonymous, and they provide clear evidence of the problems to management.

However they are conducted, stress audits will serve the function of consciousness raising as well as gathering evidence of the nature of problems.

Different schools will have different problems. In one school, pupil behaviour may be the major stress factor for all or some staff. In others, it may stem from other causes such as management style, physical conditions or excessive workload. When the most common issues of concern have been identified, they can be brought to the attention of the school’s management and/or the employer in order that these can be considered as part of the employer’s risk assessment. No more need be done than this as there is no obligation to propose solutions, but you may wish to seek a scheme of negotiations on this area around the employer’s risk assessment as staff are often best placed to suggest what would help resolve issues in their school.

Stress audits are a form of safety inspection within the HSE’s definition of safety inspections which may be carried out by safety representatives under the 1977 Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations. Safety representatives involved in carrying out stress audits, both within individual schools and more widely across the branch or district, are therefore entitled to such time off with pay as is necessary to conduct the audit and write up its findings.

Appendix 1 contains a sample stress audit questionnaire relating to stress level indicators. The questionnaire is based upon one used by Bradford local authority in a stress audit of employees.

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The NEU's stress audit questionnaire **Appendix 2**. This checklist covers a wealth of potential stress factors in order to assist NEU members in identifying the particular stress factors in particular schools or departments. The NEU also runs an online version of this survey nationally, and details of how to access this are also contained in **Appendix 2**.

Appendix 3 contains a further stress questionnaire, which focuses on the physical symptoms of stress. The survey was originally formulated by the Bolton division, and may be a useful additional survey to distribute to employees where it has been established that there are issues with stress within a school. Stress can have negative impacts both on mental and physical health, and where this is the case, it is important to be able to evidence this to management.

Further advice can also be sought from the NEU Adviceline in England on 0203 006 6266, NEU Cymru in Wales on 029 2046 5000 or NEU Northern Ireland on 028 9078 2020.

Once the stress audit is complete, it should be used to inform the employer's risk assessment process.

NEU GUIDELINES ON RISK ASSESSMENTS

As noted earlier, risk assessments are the responsibility of the employer. The following guidelines are therefore limited to advising reps and local officers about what their employer is required to do as part of the stress risk assessment process.

The legal responsibility as employer is borne by the local authority in the case of community and voluntary controlled schools, by the governing body in foundation and voluntary aided schools and by the college corporation in 6th Form Colleges. In academies which are part of a chain the employer is the academy trust and in stand-alone academies it is the governing body.

The Health and Safety Executive sets out a "five step approach" to risk assessment. This involves: looking for hazards; deciding who might be harmed and how; evaluating the risks and deciding whether existing control measures are adequate or whether more should be done; recording the findings; and reviewing the assessment from time to time. The employer is required to seek to remove the risk altogether or, where this is not practicable or possible, to seek to reduce the risk by instituting appropriate control measures.

With regard to teacher stress, "hazards" can include anything that can cause stress. The employer's risk assessment must be wide-ranging and cover the full scope of potential stress factors, in particular those identified by trade unions in stress audits. Risk assessments which look only at risk of stress due to work procedures and processes might exclude risk of stress due to work environments etc. The NEU stress audit checklist includes the most common stress factors but is not envisaged as exhaustive.

Problems with employers' stress risk assessments fall most commonly into two main categories. These are failures to identify relevant stress factors; and failures to institute adequate control measures.

Comprehensive coverage of relevant stress factors should be sought as part of any risk assessment. Guidelines should not seek to restrict risk assessments to any particular areas or issues. They may suggest that certain areas should be examined but should not seek to exclude others from consideration. They should be capable of application to any and all areas of work activity and work process, including work undertaken at home.

Differences of opinion over identification of stress factors can often be avoided by ensuring that guidelines advise that views should be sought from safety reps and employees about issues of concern and that such issues should be considered as part of the risk assessment.

Adequate control measures to tackle teacher stress should be determined by the likely incidence of stress and likely severity of injury due to stress. Removal of risk would require, for example, that a

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work activity giving rise to stress was discontinued. Where this is not practicable or possible, other control measures should be implemented to reduce the risk by, for example, amending the way in which the activity is undertaken or limiting the time spent on the activity.

Differences of opinion over the adequacy of control measures can be more difficult to resolve. Safety representatives are, however, entitled to receive copies of risk assessments, including proposed control measures. They should then make any views known about the adequacy of these measures in discussion with the employer. To assist in this process, **Appendix 4** contains examples of suggested control measures which might be used to address certain stress risks.

CASES OF EXISTING TEACHER STRESS

The guidance in this document is not intended as a substitute for direct intervention by the NEU in cases where members are already suffering mental or physical illness attributable to stress. In such cases, the NEU advises its members immediately to contact the NEU Adviceline in England on 0345 811 811, NEU Cymru in Wales on 029 2046 5000 or NEU Northern Ireland on 028 9078 2020 for support and assistance. Members facing such problems are also advised to keep a written record of specific incidents or factors which have contributed to their experience of work-related stress, and to ensure that they seek and follow medical advice where appropriate.

In addition to offering treatment and advice to tackle the physical manifestations of workplace stress, health professionals such as GPs or occupational health staff can put employers on notice that there is a problem that they need to deal with. Recording work-related stress on sick notes may not be sufficient in this regard. A letter written with the assistance of the occupational health adviser, making clear what aspects of work appear to be involved, can make the employer aware of the seriousness of a problem for the first time¹. In all cases, however, the NEU Adviceline or NEU Cymru will be able to advise on the best course of action for members suffering from work-related stress, and should be the first point of referral for members in need of assistance.

STRESS DUE TO EXCESSIVE WORKLOAD

In a Court of Appeal decision in February 2007, it was made clear that where an employee is experiencing stress due to excessive workloads and the employer is made aware of this, then even if an employer has systems in place to support staff who are suffering from work related stress (e.g. a counselling service) that this is no substitute for putting action plan measures in place to actually reduce workload. In other words, the control measures that an employer chooses to implement as a result of any stress audit and subsequent risk assessment must be effective and adequate and should be applied urgently if there is an immediate risk of harm to the health of the employee. For that reason, it is suggested that NEU representatives may consider it beneficial to re-visit schools following a stress audit and risk assessment in order to assess what, if any, measures have been taken by the employer to reduce stress and whether they are effective.

¹ Although stress is not listed as an occupational disease reportable under the *Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)*, in circumstances where a teacher is suffering a psychological illness following an accident, a near miss or an incident of physical violence at work leading to an absence from work for three or more days, the incident does become reportable. Again, advice should always be sought from the NEU in such cases.

General checklist on stress risk assessment guidance

Existence of stress risk assessment guidance

- Has the employer issued stress risk assessment guidance?
- Has the NEU been consulted about its contents?

Conduct of risk assessments

- Who is intended to carry out stress risk assessments?
- Are they “competent persons”?
- What qualifications and experience do they have?
- Have they been trained?
- What information has been provided to assist them?
- Has adequate time been made available to them?
- Is specialist advice available to them?
- Are NEU safety reps/school reps consulted?
- Are school staff generally consulted?
- Are copies of risk assessments provided to NEU safety reps/school reps?

Coverage of risk assessments

- Has the stress risk assessment been carried out in the context of the HSE Management Standards for Work Related Stress?
- Does the stress risk assessment cover the existence of stress across all areas of work for employees?
- In particular, does it cover the six stressors identified by the HSE?
- Does it cover systems of work?
- Does it cover work organisation & content?
- Does it cover work undertaken out of school hours?
- Does it cover problems identified by NEU safety reps/school reps and by school staff generally?

Control measures proposed by risk assessments

- What control measures have been proposed?
- Are they adequate?
- Is the implementation of control measures monitored?
- Are resources identified as part of the control measures provided?
- Is instruction and training identified as part of the control measures provided?

Review of risk assessments

- Are risk assessments to be reviewed annually?
- Are they to be reviewed whenever there is a change in work organisation or processes?
- Are they to be reviewed whenever further evidence of problems of stress emerges?

Review of implementation of control measures

- Have the control measures that have been proposed, been implemented?
- If so, are the control measures adequate? If not, why not?
- What further control measures, if any, need to be implemented?

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EMPLOYER POLICIES ON TEACHER STRESS

Many school employers have produced policies addressing staff stress.

NEU local officers and reps should seek to ensure that any school or employer policy is aimed at the elimination and avoidance of teacher stress as opposed to the “management” of teacher stress.

Local officers should also seek to avoid the application in schools of any “corporate policy” which is directed generally at all groups of local authority staff. Policies should be developed which are directed specifically at school staff and on the basis of the particular needs and circumstances of schools. If an employer has fully implemented the HSE’s Management Standards for Work-Related Stress, they are likely to have avoided pitfalls and have produced a sound policy.

NEU local officers are therefore advised to encourage their local teacher employers to adopt the Management Standards approach if they have not already done so.

Appendix 4 contains a checklist of features which should be included in employer policies or guidance on workplace stress, whether or not the Management Standards have been adopted.

PERSONAL INJURY CLAIMS

The NEU believes that further evidence is unnecessary to support the case for action to be taken by teacher employers on teacher stress. The problem is well documented by existing research, and a growing number of legal cases have shown the potential costs to employers of failing to act.

The Union has, over recent years, successfully obtained personal injury compensation in the courts for members who have suffered work-related stress. The willingness on the part of the courts to find in favour of employees who suffer personal injury as a result of work-related stress is a potentially significant development in case law. It remains the case, however, that significant obstacles in terms of the tests of causation and foreseeability must be overcome in any legal case taken on behalf of Union members. The NEU must therefore continue to give priority to its work to ensure that circumstances do not arise in which members are at risk of permanent damage to health due to stress and overwork.

APPENDICES:

APPENDIX 1: Stress Audit – Teacher Well-Being ‘Ready Reckoner’

APPENDIX 2: The NEU Teacher Stress Survey and guidance on the online survey

APPENDIX 3: Stress Symptom Survey

APPENDIX 4: Control Measures in Practice

APPENDIX 5: Checklist on Employer Stress Policies

NEU Health and Safety Unit

September 2018

APPENDIX 1: The NEU wellbeing 'Ready Reckoner'

This questionnaire may be used by NEU school representatives or safety representatives who are assisting NEU members experiencing stress, or who wish to survey members in their school to ascertain the extent of workplace stress being suffered. It may elicit data which could prompt a full stress risk assessment; or it may simply serve as a rough guide for individual members who wish to gauge the extent to which they may be enduring stress-related symptoms.

Higher scores are suggestive of greater levels of well-being amongst subjects of the questionnaire, whilst lower totals tend to indicate elevated degrees of stress/poor mental health. **Please note that a score of 100 or more does not necessarily indicate the absence of a problem.** It is important to seek NEU advice wherever evidence of stress emerges – the earlier it is tackled, the easier it is to put right.

Instructions: For each of the following questions, enter the number matching the description which most closely represents how you feel.

1 = Not at all 2 = Not much 3 = Sometimes 4 = Mostly 5 = Very much so

Do you feel able to concentrate on what you are doing at school?	
Do you feel that you are playing a useful part in school life?	
Do you feel capable of making decisions at school?	
Do you generally feel relaxed in your home and school life?	
Do you feel that most problems you encounter at school can be surmounted?	
Do you generally manage to keep your sense of humour?	
Do you feel happy at work, all things considered?	
Are you sleeping well?	
Are you eating well?	
Are you drinking sensibly?	
Do you cope well with changes to your job?	
Do you have a reasonable amount of energy?	
Do you feel in control of your job?	
Do you feel you are coping well in the classroom?	
Do you receive appropriate support when you need it?	
Do you get on well with your pupils?	
Do you get on well with your colleagues?	
Do you get on well with your managers?	
Do you feel free from the threat of bullying/harassment at school?	
Do you enjoy a reasonable degree of autonomy, unaffected by excessive monitoring regimes?	
Do you manage to work 'on time' fairly regularly?	
Do you find your job satisfying and fulfilling?	

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Do you have a life outside work?

Do you intend to remain in teaching for the foreseeable future?

Do you look forward to returning to school after a weekend or holiday?

Now add up your score.

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More than 100 = low evidence of stress – **but see caveat above**;

51 to 100 = moderate evidence of stress;

Up to 50 = high evidence of stress.

APPENDIX 2: The NEU stress survey

Instructions: Rank each of the following statements from 1 to 5:

1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Ambivalent, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

	DEMANDS	1	2	3	4	5
1.	My physical working conditions are acceptable					
2.	Our rest facilities are clean and well maintained					
3.	My total working hours are satisfactory					
4.	The number of after school meetings is manageable					
5.	Deadlines and time pressures are achievable and reasonable					
6.	Ofsted/Estyn inspections do not cause me excessive pressure					
7.	The balance between work and home life is about right					
8.	The school values the time I put in at home					
9.	I am able to take a proper break during the school day					
10.	Lesson planning requirements are realistic					
11.	Marking requirements are sensible and not overly bureaucratic					
	CONTROL	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I have opportunities to express my ideas and points of view					
13.	I have enough time to carry out all of my tasks					
14.	Classroom observation is not excessive					
15.	I am encouraged to use my skills and initiative to do my work					
16.	I feel trusted by management to carry out my role					
	SUPPORT	1	2	3	4	5
17.	I receive appropriate training					
18.	My managers are supportive					
19.	I regularly receive positive feedback on my own work					
20.	There are enough support staff in the school					
21.	The school benefits from effective leadership					
22.	The appraisal system is supportive rather than critical					
	RELATIONSHIPS	1	2	3	4	5
23.	I have a good relationship with my line manager					
24.	I get on well with colleagues					
25.	Management promote positive behaviours to avoid conflict and ensure fairness					
26.	Staff are able to complain without risk of repercussions					
27.	I rarely have to deal with disruptive pupils					
28.	I rarely have to deal with violent pupils					
29.	I do not have to worry about violence from aggressive parents					
	ROLE	1	2	3	4	5
30.	I'm clear about what is expected of me at work					
31.	My skills are well-used					

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32.	I feel valued in my role					
	CHANGE	1	2	3	4	5
33.	I can cope with the pace of organisational or curriculum change					
34.	I do not struggle with new initiatives					
35.	There is full staff consultation when any significant change is proposed					
36.	Changes are accompanied by appropriate support and training, where necessary					

Selecting up to five statements, please indicate which factors listed above have the biggest impact on your workplace stress. Please list the numbers below;

Please list any issues causing work related stress which are not addressed in the questions above (continue on a separate sheet if necessary):

Please return completed questionnaires to:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

NOTES ON THE NEU STRESS SURVEY

The NEU stress survey can be used by representatives or safety representatives who wish to establish the extent of teacher stress within their workplace. It allows for more in-depth analysis than the 'ready reckoner' and is informed by the HSE's management standards approach. The questions are structured according to the six risk factors, and again this can highlight if there are any particular areas which need to be addressed. For instance, the results may show that the majority of staff are particularly concerned about their job demands, and this information can be used to negotiate workload reductions with management.

The NEU offers a standardised online stress survey. The online survey is very similar to the NEU stress survey contained in Appendix 2, and also asks about symptoms and causes of stress. Safety reps or school reps can request access to the survey from NEU HQ. The health and safety adviser or branch/district secretary may wish to request the survey in conjunction with the rep or where a school currently does not have a rep.

NEU HQ will issue an online link to the survey which can be distributed to all members or teachers in the school, and will forward a breakdown of the results once the survey has closed. It is not possible to amend the national stress survey, so any representatives wishing to ask specific questions in a stress survey will need to conduct this locally. Full guidance on the national online NEU stress survey and a survey request form are available from the NEU Health and Safety Unit..

Local surveys can also be undertaken electronically, for instance via Survey Monkey or Google Forms. Survey monkey requires a subscription fee to conduct surveys longer than 10 questions and to more than 100 people; however NEU representatives should check if their branch or district has a subscription which they may be able to use. Google forms offer a similar service which is free to use for all surveys, and allows for forms to be created and analysis to be carried out once the responses are collected.

The link for an electronic survey can be emailed to members. If some members are apprehensive about using their work email address and/or computer, suggest that they instead provide their personal email address and complete the survey from home. The standard stress survey consists of 35 multiple choice questions, so it should not take too much time to complete.

If representatives and/or members would prefer to distribute hard copies of the survey, than the form contained in Appendices 1-3 can be printed and handed out to colleagues within the school. If members are not comfortable providing their name on the survey, they should be able to remain anonymous. Additionally, it may be sensible to provide a means of staff returning completed forms anonymously, for instance a sealed box. If the survey is distributed in paper form, once all results have been received, they will need to be manually inputted to allow for analysis, and this can be time consuming. However, online survey systems carry out the analysis automatically for the user and also display the information in graph format, which is useful when using the results in discussions with management.

It is also important to note that all of the surveys can be amended according to the specific issues within in each workplace. For instance, you may become aware of a bullying problem within a specific school or academy chain, and you could tailor the questions to focus on bullying and harassment. The surveys can of course be used as they are, but there is also flexibility to allow them to be as useful as possible.

APPENDIX 3: Stress symptom survey

1. Have you, in the last 3 years, experienced any symptoms which you attribute to stress at work and which resulted in your absence from work? (A non-exhaustive list is detailed below).

YES	
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NO	
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2. Have you, in the last 3 years, experienced any symptoms which you attribute to stress at work but which did not result in your absence from work? (A non-exhaustive list is detailed below).

YES	
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NO	
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Stress symptoms can include: headaches, anxiety, mood changes, disturbed sleep patterns, skin problems, digestion problems, loss of libido, increased consumption of alcohol or caffeine, increased blood pressure, change in appetite.

3. If you answered YES to either of the questions above, do you attribute your stress to any of the following workplace factors? (Please tick all that are appropriate).

- Management style
- Bullying/harassment
- The implementation of change
- Lack of support from school leaders
- Pupil behaviour
- Workload
- Capability proceedings or the threat of capability
- High staff turnover
- Ofsted/Esytyn pressures

4. Have you ever considered, or are you now considering leaving [Name of school] for another post, either partly or fully because of the reasons indicated above?

YES	
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NO	
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5. Have you ever considered, or are you now considering leaving education, either partly or fully because of the reasons indicated above?

YES	
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NO	
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You are invited to make additional comments on any of the issues above, or any other work-related matters on the reverse of this sheet.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Please return completed surveys to:

APPENDIX 4: Control measures in practice

The following sections consider some appropriate “control measures” to reduce the risk of stress in separate situations. In each it is assumed that an NEU stress audit has been carried out in the school and the employer informed of the issues identified by employees.

DEMANDS

The most negative responses were in relation to the following issues:

- Unsatisfactory working hours
- Too many after school meetings
- Unrealistic lesson planning requirements
- Overly bureaucratic marking requirements

Appropriate control measures to deal with risks associated with working time and bureaucracy should be found in the school’s general policy on use and allocation of directed time for teachers. The policy should also have regard to the Ofsted [clarification document](#) which dispels myths around what Ofsted require. This document clearly states that teachers are not required to engage in written dialogue with pupils via marking, and the schools’ marking policy should reflect this.

Comprehensive NEU guidance on tackling workload in schools is available in the NEU [workload toolkit](#).

The DfE has produced, in conjunction with the NEU and other teacher unions, a reducing workload [toolkit](#). The toolkit sets out how school leaders should work with their staff to make meaningful reductions to workload.

CONTROL

The most negative responses were in relation to the following issues:

- Lack of opportunities to express ideas and points of view
- Lack of encouragement to use own skills and initiative

In this area, appropriate control measures might involve formulation of a policy on such areas of management as consultation over decision making, team-working, delegation and feedback.

SUPPORT

The most negative responses were in relation to the following issues:

- Lack of appropriate training
- Lack of support in dealing with bureaucratic paperwork

The school might need to re-examine its CPD policy in order to make sure that all teachers are able to benefit from appropriate training opportunities. Administrative and clerical tasks should have been transferred to appropriate support staff as detailed above.

RELATIONSHIPS

The most negative responses were in relation to the following issues:

- Dealing with disruptive/violent pupils/parents

The control measures in this area should be clearly established in the terms of the school’s behaviour policy which should reflect [DfE](#), employer and [NEU](#) guidance on unacceptable pupil

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behaviour. The requirements for implementation of control measures require that the policy is clearly communicated to pupils and parents and is supportively managed by the head teacher and governors.

ROLE

The most negative responses were in relation to the following issues:

- Not feeling valued in their role

Management style is the key here. Senior leadership teams are sometimes wrapped up in their own stresses and consequently fail to appreciate that they can appear distant or aloof in their dealings with staff. Co-ordinating a stress risk assessment and taking action on its findings will help improve this situation for everyone.

CHANGE

The most negative responses were in relation to the following issues:

- A lack of consultation when any significant change is proposed

Again, the control measure here is essentially about management style. An open, consultative approach to leadership and decision-making tends to lead to more motivated, happier staff than a rigidly 'top-down' model.

APPENDIX 5: Checklist on employer stress policies

The following checklist sets out a summary of those features which should form part of any employer guidelines to schools in this area, whether or not the HSE Management Standards for Work-Related Stress have been adopted.

- An acceptance by the employer that stress is an organisational issue which should be tackled by addressing the underlying causes of stress
- A commitment by the employer to seek to identify the extent of teacher stress problems and the underlying causes of these by means of appropriate survey work, use of absence data, investigation of information received from employees and their representatives
- A commitment by the employer to work to ensure that its policy is specifically adopted by all governing bodies, including those which bear the legal responsibility as employer for risk assessment
- Specific provision within the policy which states that head teachers, as managers acting to implement the health and safety policies of the employer, are required to implement the terms of the policy in their schools
- Guidance and support for head teachers and other school managers on risk assessment in accordance with the foregoing guidelines, including access to advice and training and provision of model checklist and report forms
- Cross-reference to other relevant policies such as policies on attendance monitoring and harassment/bullying
- Provision of in-service training for employees on issues such as identification of stress and its causes and methods of stress avoidance
- Provision of occupational health services and counselling services for employees who feel they are suffering stress
- Provision for continued monitoring of workplace stress by the employer, in consultation with trade union safety representatives.