



19 January 2001 12.15 to 2.00pm, Health and Safety Laboratory

November 1 2000 is National Stress Awareness Day.

- **Julie De Groot, Occupational Health Advisor, Sheffield University**  
Introduction - Why we have to take occupational stress seriously -followed by
- **Claire Harris MSc and Kevin Daniels PhD CPsychol from Sheffield University Management School**

Many things can cause occupational stress, and yet there is very little research that deals with how occupational stress can cause emotional harm. In this presentation, we focus on the processes through which people come to recognise stressors, and how these:

- influence emotional reactions to stressors
- affect coping with responses and
- influence effects to limit exposure to occupational stressors.

We also investigate social, organisational and individual factors that influence these processes. Drawing on case study evidence, we also show how understanding how people perceive the risks of stress can help organisations develop more tailored interventions to manage the risks of stress.

To book a place please either return the slip below or contact Lisa Allan on 0114 289 2679

**A light buffet will be provided.  
Please park in the pay and display directly outside the building.**

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Name:

Position:

Company:

Address:

Tel:

Fax:

email:

and send to: **Lisa Allan  
Health and Safety Laboratory  
Broad Lane  
Sheffield S3 7HQ**



the newsletter of the Sheffield Occupational Health Development Group

# The Occupational Health Strategy Framework for Sheffield

It took a long time and a great deal of work to agree our strategic framework. The reasons for this are obvious. Members of the group came from a variety of different backgrounds with different expectations and emphases. In addition, some of us were more willing to aim for the apparently unattainable whereas others just wanted to see some change however small. But it was all good natured and cohesive and we enjoyed working

together to achieve an agreed framework. Without this we would never have been prepared when the Health & Safety Executive opportunity arose last year. All the work we had done paid off in the shape of sufficient funds to enable HSL to provide the group with a project manager for three years. We were clear what we wanted and we went for it.

The Strategic Framework was launched two years ago and since that time we have worked towards achieving its recommendations (Figure 1). The ultimate aim of the strategy is to develop a resource centre available to industry, workers and the general public as a source of information on occupational health issues. It will also serve as a focus for information sharing amongst stakeholders involved in occupational health throughout the city. This will be a true partnership in the spirit of the modernised NHS and needs to be

supported and encouraged by everyone who understands the importance of occupational health as a key force for health improvement.

Other issues to be encouraged within the framework include the development of a strong occupational health presence within primary care, more resources into research and development in occupational health, a greater focus on occupational health in the undergraduate medical curriculum and other clinical training, and a higher profile for occupational health within the media and on the city's health agendas. This newsletter, our website and our Annual Conference are part of our profile raising strategy.

It will take more time to implement the strategy but we are strongly committed to it and we believe that it truly reflects Sheffield's needs in the field of occupational health. We would welcome any suggestions for its improvement from our readers and supporters.

**Frada Eskin  
Chairman, Sheffield Occupational Health Development Group**

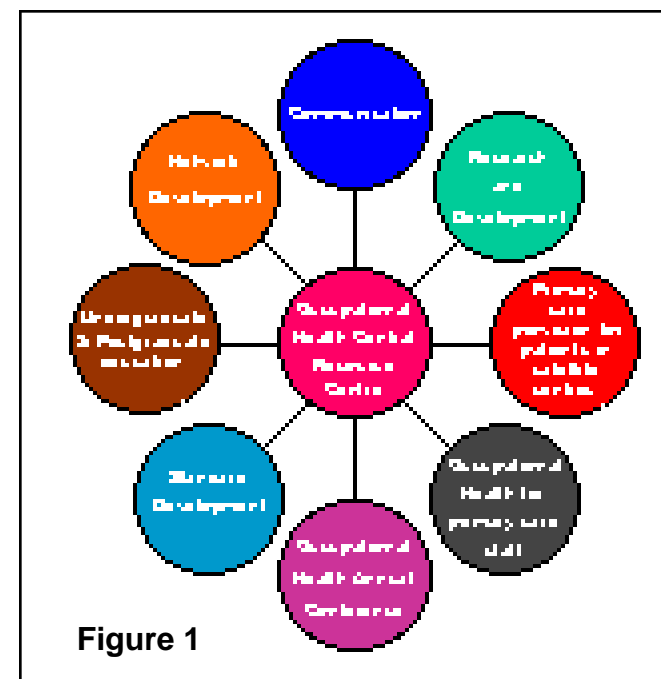


Figure 1

## This issue

Occupational Health Strategy for Sheffield

Occupational Stress - does it exist - what can we do about it?

Securing Health Together

HAZ Impact on Occupational Health

*Network Meeting  
Risks of Stress at Work*

### Editorial

Welcome to the second issue of Healthy Work Matters. In this issue we focus on the National Occupational Health strategy launched by the Government, 'Securing Health Together' which we will be putting into a local perspective at our second annual conference on 1 November.

We also try to answer the question 'Does occupational stress exist?', to tie in with the National Stress Awareness Day. The event, which is on 1 November 2000, is run every year by the International Stress Management Association (ISMA), and this year, it will be in collaboration with the Royal and Sunalliance, with contributions from HSE. An information pack is being devised by ISMA; more information can be obtained from the HSE Info-line on 0541 545 500.

Please make sure that you note the date of our next Network meeting, which is also on occupational stress. Full details can be found on the back page.

Finally, I would like to encourage you to send in your thoughts, comments and views on the Newsletter and any occupational health issues you would like us to cover.

Lisa Allan  
www.healthyworksheffield.org.uk  
tel: 0114 2892679

## Occupational Stress - does it exist - what can we do about it?

Significant numbers of people who are in work suffer from psychological ill health: **20% of the workforce were found to have significant symptoms of psychological ill health in the British Household Panel Survey 1996-7.**

Although some of this ill health is triggered by general health problems and personal difficulties, research has demonstrated that aspects of people's jobs and working lives can play a critical role.

There can be many key work related factors associated with illness including:

- work overload and pressure
- lack of control over work and lack of participation in decision making
- monotonous work and lack of variety
- unclear management and work roles
- lifting and handling, uncomfortable postures often related to poor equipment design
- conflict between work and home demands

All of these have been shown to be associated with higher incidence of cardiovascular disorders, psychological disturbance (including depression and anxiety), musculo-skeletal problems, alcohol misuse, accidents, sickness absence and early retirement on medical grounds. There are implications for employers, trade unions and employees.

- Employers bear major consequences of occupational stress in their workforce - it is costly, risky and not good for business !
- Trade Unions are concerned about its impact on the welfare of members
- Employees risk damaging their health which may effect both their working and personal life

So what can be done about it ? There are actions which can be taken by employers, employees and trade unions to prevent and reduce work related stress and indeed many employers and trade unions are already taking this very seriously and initiating changes in policies and practices as well as providing services to support staff. Employees also have an important role to play in taking personal responsibility for their own health and encouraging colleagues to seek appropriate support.

This topic will be explored further at our next Network Meeting, see back page.

**Morag Maddocks, Consultant Organisational Psychologist, Community Health, Sheffield**

## Securing Health Together: Great Britain's Occupational Health Strategy

On 5 July a new national occupational health strategy for Great Britain: Securing Health Together was launched. The strategy takes a wide view of occupational health and considers both the effect of work on health and the effect of health on work. It goes beyond just focusing on the prevention of ill health to include treatment and rehabilitation.

One of the most important aspects of the strategy is its focus on partnership and collaboration. It is not just HSC/E's strategy. The strategy wants everyone to join in and make a contribution to occupational health. We hope that everybody concerned will contribute: from government departments, local authorities, health authorities, employers, employees and their representatives to occupational health professionals.

### Securing Health Together (SHT) aims to:

- reduce ill health both in workers and the public, caused or made worse by work;
- help people made ill from work or from other causes to return to work;
- improve work opportunities for people currently not in employment due to ill health or disability; and
- use the work environment to help people maintain or improve their health.

### To help achieve this, challenging ten year targets have been set so that by 2010 we want:

- to reduce the incidence of work-related ill health by 20%;
- to reduce ill health to members of the public caused by work by 20%;
- to reduce the number of days lost due to work-related ill health by 30%;
- everyone currently in employment but off work due to ill health or disability to be made aware of opportunities for rehabilitation back into work as early as possible, where necessary and appropriate; and
- everyone currently not in employment due to ill health or disability to be made aware of and offered opportunities to prepare for and find work, where necessary and appropriate.

The progress towards the targets will need to be evaluated as we strongly believe that the success of the strategy depends not only on partnership but also on a clear indication that there is success in improving occupational health and moving towards the targets over the ten-year period.

Activity on the strategy will be directed through five programmes:

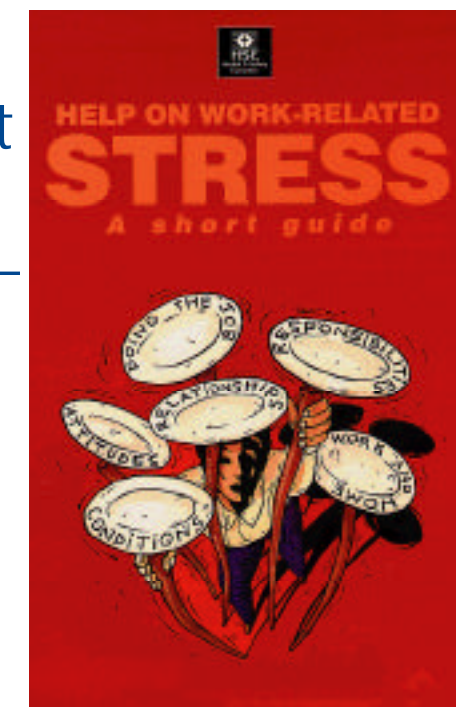
- compliance with the law;
- continuous improvement;
- developing our knowledge;
- ensuring everyone has the necessary skills; and
- having in place the right systems to deliver support and advice on occupational health.

HSC/E will facilitate the implementation of the strategy and would like everyone to become involved and use the five programmes to reflect on what their businesses are doing, where their gaps are and how they can contribute. The national targets will only be achieved if organisations themselves set their own targets and monitor their own progress.

We are also encouraging organisations to submit examples of best practice in occupational health through the web-site at [www.ohstrategy.net](http://www.ohstrategy.net) which will be used to create a database for all to access and share successes and challenges. It is important that these examples of best practice include evidence of evaluation which can then be used to contribute towards the targets.

Copies of the strategy document can also be downloaded from the web-site or through HSE Books (01787 881 165). If you require further information about the strategy then please contact Nicki Ursu at HSE (020 7717 6978).

If you would like a free copy of this booklet please contact HSE Books on 01787 881165



## Health Action Zones and their impact on Occupational Health

If you're sitting there thinking what the world really needs now is yet another new initiative then your luck is in, because the Workplace Health Programme is coming to a Health Action Zone (HAZ) Priority Area near you.

The difference is that by reducing the effects of work on patients' health and helping those with long-term ill-health to

stay in work, this programme aims to get to the root causes of ill-health in the areas that need most help; Parson Cross, Burngreave, Manor/Castle and Darnall/Tinsley.

So, how are we going to do it you say! Well - advice, support and awareness are essential of course. This will come from:

- general practices and workplace health centres for patients
- supporting other healthcare professionals when they give advice
- forging partnerships to meet the needs of small businesses
- regular campaigning with emphasis on stress and musculoskeletal problems.

While at the same time common patterns of work based ill-health will be identified which will form part of a concerted campaign, working alongside other prevention agencies.

By the end of the HAZ programme, every practice and patient in a priority area will know how to access occupational health advice and support. The advice given by general practices will have increased significantly and the Workplace Health Programme will have developed quality standards and evaluation methods to continue the service. Then this will be one new initiative that has done its job.

For more information of Sheffield's Work Place Health Programme please contact Simon Pickvance on 0114 2755760