

Team Stress Risk Assessment: Conducting a Focus Group

One way of assessing in greater depth whether your team has problems with work-related stress is to conduct a focus group.

Focus groups are:

- A way of listening to colleagues and learning from them
- Facilitate active participation of employees in the risk assessment process for work-related stress
- Enable managers to demonstrate commitment to a participative process of managing the risk from work-related stress

The purpose of running a stress focus group is to allow staff to discuss their experiences of recognising when they are under excessive pressure and possible explanations for this. The focus group allows potential solutions to be explored together, so all members of the team can tackle stress at source.

In organising a stress focus group the following must be considered:

- The ideal number to involve in a focus group is 8-10.
Consider running more than one group if you manage a larger number of staff
- Are participants likely to be comfortable with each other?
This is important to ensure all staff can be heard. If you feel some staff will be inhibited, it may be beneficial to set up smaller groups where staff will share a common interest
- Establish a group facilitator, who is responsible for leading the group discussion
- Staff should be invited to attend and should be fully aware of the reason for the meeting and how it has been designed
- Ensure the group is time limited
- Consider preparing a list of topics to encourage group discussion in advance(The 6 areas of stress outlined in appendices 1 and 2 would be good starting points)
- Select a meeting room that will ensure people are free from interruptions and distractions
- Ensure the results of the meeting are translated into action

You can seek further advice and information on running focus groups on the Health and Safety Executive website. www.hse.gov.uk