Job Retention Advice and Guidance

Helping you to stay in employment

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CONTENTS (Click on the page *number* to jump to that section)

- Introduction & Acknowledgements 2
- What is the Equality Act (2010)? 3
- Am I covered by the Equality Act (2010)? 3
- What are Workplace Adjustments? 4
- The role of Occupational Health in job retention 5
- The role of GPs and Fit Notes in job retention 6
- The role of Trade Union support in job retention 8
- Mediation in the Workplace 9
- Staff Wellness Passport 11
- Wellness and Recovery Action Plan for work (WRAP) 12
- Access to Work 13
- Access to Work Mental Health Support Service 14
- Disciplinary & Grievance Procedures 15
- Bullying & Harassment 17
- Disclosure 19
- Well-being Resources 21
- Useful Employment Helplines 22
- Legal Advice 24
- Some Final Pointers 25

Appendixes

- Appendix 1: Example of a WRAP 26
- Appendix 2: Strain Audit 33
- Appendix 3: Solutions to Organisational Stress 35
- Appendix 4: Subject Access Request Template 38

INTRODUCTION

About this guide

We know that work is generally good for our health and wellbeing and can play a positive part in the recovery process for people with mental ill health.

Positive or good work (a job which is healthy, safe and offers you some influence over how it is done) can bring a sense of purpose and belonging, financial security, social participation and increased self-esteem. It can be a beneficial prescription in itself.

The information contained within this guide has been produced to help people supported by our services to access information about how to stay in employment more easily, to know how things might work, should you become ill, and to help empower you to help yourself.

There are many organisations, both local and national, that can support you too. If you are reading this handbook in electronic form whilst online, simply click on the hyperlinks, indicated by this icon:

The link will take you straight to the suggested website pages.

This booklet has been financed and distributed with the help of the *London & South East Network for Job Retention*. For further information, please contact Lan Luong, Secretary, at: *Lan.Luong@smartlondon.org.uk*

It is envisaged that this booklet also be a living document, and as such, will be intermittently revised, updated and added to. If you have any suggestions or comments to feed into the editorial review team, please use Lan as the point of contact to do so.

If you are a job retention practitioner, you may be interested to find out more about additional training, relevant resources and regional job retention networks by visiting *www.jobretention.org.uk*.

This booklet is intended for free distribution and should not be sold anywhere.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This guide was conceived and created by Lorraine Looker with additional input from Catherine Di Lella, Stephen Charlery, Roger Butterworth and Dave Costello. All are practitioners in job retention, and are members of the *London & South East Network for Job Retention*.

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WHAT IS THE EQUALITY ACT 2010?

The Equality Act (2010) is designed to promote the rights of disabled people (and in some cases non-disabled people) and to protect them from discrimination in recruitment, arrangements for dismissal, terms of employment, promotion, transfer, training or receiving any other benefit offered to employees.

Under the Equality Act 2010 there are nine protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

To qualify for protection under the Act, an individual must demonstrate they are covered by a protected characteristic.

The most likely protected characteristic used to protect those with mental ill health would be the disability characteristic which covers mental health, physical health and hidden disabilities which are severe and enduring. This may also include a diagnosis such as depression, bi-polar, schizophrenia, personality disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder.

If individuals have multiple health conditions or illnesses, these may also be covered under the *Equality Act (2010)* including cancer, multiple sclerosis, musculoskeletal issues, diabetes, autism and dyslexia.

Employers, no matter their size must comply with the *Equality Act (2010)*, including providers of employment services, trade organisations and qualifying bodies.

All employees and job applicants are covered by the Act including individuals on work placements and vocational training, and contract workers. Anyone undertaking voluntary work is unlikely to come under the protection of the Act.

Am I covered by the Equality Act (2010)?

Under the Act a person has a disability if they have a **physical or mental impairment**, which has a **long-term** (likely to last 12 month or the remainder of the person's life) and **substantial adverse** (more than minor or trivial) effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities (activities that are carried out frequently by most people including work-related activities).

Under the Act, a mental health condition can be **mental impairment** if it meets the criteria. Some people with a history of disability are also covered by the Act even if they have recovered (for example, a person who has had a mental health condition in the past).

There is no need for a person to prove medically the cause of the diagnosis; the most important thing to consider is the effect of the impairment.

To find out more about the Equality Act and who is covered under the Act, visit:
www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance

WHAT ARE WORKPLACE ADJUSTMENTS?

A workplace adjustment is a change or adjustment unique to a person's needs that will enable them to do their job.

A person is eligible for adjustments termed **reasonable** if they are legally defined as disabled (see definition on previous page). A *reasonable adjustment* is an adjustment to the workplace or work practices that is effective to the employee, without being too disruptive, costly or impractical for the employer to provide.

Whilst there is a particular imperative for employers to consider reasonable adjustments for those legally defined as disabled, it is good practice to consider workplace adjustments for anyone who is affected by a mental health condition or stress at work.

Reasonable adjustments should always be made with the employee's involvement and should be seen by the employer as reasonable requests. The employee cannot make unlimited requests for reasonable adjustments but does have the right to ensure that they are able to carry out their job role effectively and retain their employment.

Adjustments are often quite simple and inexpensive. Here are just a few examples, there are many more:

- A gradual return to work after a period of sickness absence
- Providing regular supervision or other support
- Time off to attend medical appointments, groups or therapy sessions
- Providing a nearby parking space for a disabled employee
- Mental Health Awareness training for other staff
- Acquiring or modifying equipment
- Altering working hours

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is the leading source of free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues.

Visit their guide for more information about reasonable adjustments here:
https://askjan.org/index.cfm

WHAT IS OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND WHAT DO THEY DO?

Occupational Health is a type of medical service used to:

- support employees and employers
- promote wellbeing in the workplace

It can be used for both physical and mental health issues.

If you are off sick long term, returning from sickness absence or struggling to cope at work, your employer may seek advice from the occupational health team. You may also request to be referred to the service through the company's own occupational health service or an outside agency.

The occupational health adviser will carry out an assessment with you and report back to the employer.

This can help the employer understand what you need to:

- feel better
- return to work
- do your job
- address any problems that could cause further health or absence issues including a breakdown in working relationships.

What can I expect on my visit to occupational health?

You will see a nurse or doctor for a routine occupational health assessment. During the appointment you will be asked some questions to help establish a full history of your health and focus on any areas affecting your health and work.

The occupational health team may request a telephone consultation; however, this is often not effective for people experiencing mental health difficulties, so a face-to face consultation can be requested.

What should I bring to my appointment?

Take any medical reports or GP letters detailing your condition and any information about the medication you are taking.

You may also bring a friend of family member along to support you if you wish.

Is my visit to the Occupational Health service confidential?

The occupational health team will not disclose any personal information or information about your health or diagnosis to anyone else without your consent, including your employer unless there are immediate concerns relating to your own safety or the safety of others.

What happens if the Occupational Health department need more medical information from me?

Occupational health staff may need more information about your health from your GP or a specialist but can only ask for this with your permission.

If further information is needed the process will be explained to you during your visit.

You may also request to see a copy of the report produced before it is sent to your employer so you can check for any errors in the information you have given before it is sent to your employer. This is called **Prior Sight**. You may need to explicitly ask about this at the end of the assessment.

Any medical reports from your GP or a specialist will be sent directly to the occupational health service and not your employer.

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What will the Occupational Health service tell my employer?

After your visit, occupational health will prepare a response to the manager who made your referral or to your human resources adviser.

It is their job to assess your health and advise you and your employer on how this affects your work. They will also offer advice about whether you are fit to carry out your normal work duties or if your work needs to be adjusted. If possible, they will discuss how long your recovery may take. Where there is a long-term disability, including a disability that is not always present but occurs in spells or is sporadic, they will advise on adjustments to be considered by your employer.

Does my employer need to know what is wrong with my health?

If you have already told your employer about your diagnosis or ill-health, then the information about how this affects your work can be more detailed. However, often the employer does not need to know the specific nature of any condition, nor any personal issues that could also be impacting your mental health, to help better support you in the workplace, and to make any reasonable adjustments as necessary.

Can I see the response to my employer?

The occupational health staff will explain the advice that will be given to your employer during your visit. If you have not requested prior sight of the report, they should also send you a copy of the response at the same time they send this to your manager or human resources adviser.

What happens if I have referred myself to the Occupational Health service?

If you have referred yourself to the occupational health service, then you can discuss whether it is appropriate to contact your employer and talk about any advice to be given to them. Your health is their priority, and they will not do anything that may impact negatively on your health.

On occasions they may advise you to return to work with some temporary restrictions to safeguard your health and support your recovery. For instance, if there are any 'safety critical' issues to consider, such as driving roles, working in dangerous areas etc. the advice may be to relinquish such duties until a later time, pending a risk assessment.

Your GP

If you are struggling at work or need to be signed off sick, your GP would usually be the first person you will see and can provide a **fit note** for people who are feeling too unwell to work.

An absence from work can occur for a number of reasons including ill mental health and unresolved workplace difficulties, which if not resolved, may impact on our mental health and wellbeing.

What is the purpose of a Fit Note?

A *fit note* can help you get back to work when you are able to. It replaced the previous *sick note* and differs in that it should help you to get back to work sooner rather than later, or even avoid going sick altogether, if workplace adjustments are made. This is in recognition that unnecessary time off from work can be at the expense of your health and confidence.

If you have been signed off sick for a long period of time, GPs are able to provide recommendations or reasonable adjustments to help advise your employer using the fit note. This will be provided if your health condition affects what you can do at work.

Your doctor will only give you a fit note if your health affects your work. They will discuss with you how your health affects what you can do at work, they may think about your fitness to work in general rather than just your current job. You should ask your GP to give you practical advice in the fit note about what you can do at work rather than simply recording your health condition and deeming you unable to work.

You should then discuss this advice with your employer to ascertain whether they can make changes to help you to return to work. This could include reasonable adjustments, either for a temporary period, or sometimes on a more permanent basis.

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Your GP could also refer you to the Government's Fit for Work programme, which is designed to help you return to work more quickly. Your GP or employer can refer you to the programme with your permission.

Once referred, an occupational health professional helps design a Return-to-Work Plan to help you return to work. Legislation now means this plan can be accepted as evidence by your employer in the same way as a GP Fit Note. You do not need to obtain further fit notes from your GP.

A Fit Note is advisory rather than mandatory. This means that an employer can choose **not** to comply with the recommendations, although this is not good practice. It also means that if you yourself feel ready to return to work sooner than the period of time you were signed off for, you have the right to do so. You do not need to be signed back on by your GP.

For more information, go to: *www.fitforwork.org/*

For more information on fit notes and proof of sickness, go to:
www://acas/org.uk/absence-from-work/fit-notes-and-proof-of-sickness

TRADE UNION SUPPORT

If you are a member of a **trade union**, you should be entitled to free advice and representation to assist you with any workplace issues that may be affecting you while at work.

If you need support, contact your local union rep who is usually employed by the same company you work for. If the rep is too busy, contact your local Regional Organiser through the union's main head office.

The unions provide:

- support and represent you through difficult workplace situations including disciplinary issues, sickness monitoring meetings and redundancy consultations.

Read your union membership carefully. You may be entitled to free legal advice from the union's solicitors. Referral is usually made through the Union's Regional Organiser.

Some unions will not support a legal case if you have been a member for less than six months before the problems started.

MEDIATION IN THE WORKPLACE

What is mediation?

Mediation is a voluntary and confidential way of resolving disputes at work between people.
Mediators are independent and do not make judgments or make decisions about outcomes. They simply help guide you through the process and help you to resolve any problems within the workplace if possible, by asking questions to help everyone understand the issues and talk about any underlying problems.

The aim of workplace mediation is to restore and maintain the employment relationship wherever possible. This means the focus is on working together to go forward, not who was right or wrong in the past.

All discussions with the mediator or the other party are 'without prejudice', which means that nothing said can be referred to in any court action unless both sides agree to this.

If your employer suggests mediation, and you have been mentally unwell or under considerable stress, do take time to consider your own current level of resilience; it may be that now is not the best time to enter mediation, and it may be better to defer engaging in it until you are feeling stronger.

You should not feel undue pressure from your employer to agree to enter a mediation process.
It should always be voluntary.

Why use mediation?

Mediation is a process to help people to focus on the future instead of looking to the past. It is not about right or wrong or apportioning blame. Rather it focuses on collaborative problem-solving and on rebuilding working relationships. It is optional so either side can withdraw at any stage in the process.

Mediation is more likely to help the employer and employee to get to the real problem and make changes to working practices that benefit employees and the organisation long term.

Stages of mediation

The most commonly used model of mediation in the UK is the facilitative approach, in which the mediator actively guides the process.

Separate meeting

The aim of this first meeting is to allow everyone involved to tell their story separately and find out what they want out of the process.

Joint meeting

The mediator brings the individuals together and invites them to explain their side of the story during a period of uninterrupted time. At this stage, the mediator will begin to summarise the main areas of agreement and disagreement and draw up an agenda with the parties for the rest of the mediation.

Exploring the issues

The aim of this part of the meeting is to begin to shift the focus from the past to the future and begin to look for constructive solutions.

Having identified the issues, the mediation is now about encouraging communication between everyone involved and helping them to understand, empathise and change perceptions.

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Building and writing an agreement

As the process develops, the mediator will encourage and support joint problem-solving by the parties, ensuring the solution and agreements are workable and record any agreement reached.

Closing the mediation

Once an agreement has been reached, the mediator will bring the meeting to a close. A copy agreed statement to those involved will be supplied to each person with an explanation about their responsibilities.

In some cases, no agreement is reached, and other steps may be taken later to resolve the conflict. However, nothing that has been said during the mediation can be used in future proceedings.

How to get a workplace mediator?

Many large employers have workplace mediators available. Check your policies and procedures at work for more information. **Employers can also purchase mediation services from a number of providers including:**

www.acas.org.uk

www.mediate.co.uk

www.thetcmgroup.com

www.promediate.co.uk

www.stevehindmarsh.co.uk

www.workplacemediation.co.uk

WHAT IS A STAFF WELLNESS PASSPORT?

A **staff passport** is where you can share information with your manager about anything that may affect you at work, such as a physical disability, learning disability, caring responsibilities, observation of religious traditions, gender reassignment or long-term health or mental health conditions.

You can also use the passport to tell your manager about early warning signs of poor health, workplace triggers for poor health or stress or potential impact of poor health on your performance as well as other issues.

HOW CAN COMPLETING A STAFF WELLNESS PASSPORT HELP?

The passport will help you keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed between you and your manager, as well as a return-to-work plan if you need some time off for medical reasons.

This will help your manager provide you with a supportive environment, so that you can fulfil your potential at work. Your manager may suggest the passport to you as a support tool, but it is your choice whether to use it and, once it is filled in, it belongs to you.

A staff passport can be helpful when you change line managers or move to a new department. It can help you to more easily clarify to your new manager your disability needs and carry over adjustments that were working well for you, without having to return to square one.

It will need to be reviewed on a regular basis especially if there are changes including your disability or health, personal circumstances, job requirements, your role or your working environment.

If you do not feel able to disclose the full nature of your disability, health condition or circumstances to your manager or your manager's manager; adjustments can be identified through an appointment with occupational health, which will make appropriate recommendations on your behalf.

Here is an example of a Staff Wellness Passport used by the NHS for its staff:

https://www.nhsemployers.org/-/media/Employers/Publications/AFA/Health-passport-Final-online.pdf

A WELLNESS RECOVERY ACTION PLAN (**WRAP**) FOR WORK

A **WRAP** can help employees to support their own mental health by reflecting on the causes of stress and poor mental health and by taking ownership of practical steps to help address these triggers.

The plan can teach you how to keep yourself well, to identify and monitor your symptoms and to use simple, safe personal skills, supports and strategies to reduce or eliminate symptoms. It is a self-management approach which compliments professional health support.

Completing the plan will take time and you may want to involve trusted colleagues, friends or family in assisting you, but once completed it will be an important document to refer back to on a daily basis and at times of difficulty. You can complete it with the help of someone you know and trust or you may wish to work on it on your own. You may, if you choose, share it with any health professionals that are supporting you.

You may also involve your GP, health professional or line manager or employer.

The Wellness Recovery Action Plan can be shared with your line manager as well as your human resources team. It will act as an agreement of what support you would like put into place, should you begin to become unwell.

There is a blank wellness and recovery action plan for work in *Appendix 1* of this guide, which you are free to use to support you to retain your employment at work.

ACCESS TO WORK

Access to Work is a publicly funded employment support programme to help more disabled people start or stay in work. It can provide practical and financial support if you have a disability or long-term physical or mental health condition.

An Access to Work grant can pay for practical support to help you start working, stay in work or move into self-employment or start a business. This funding could be to help pay for special equipment such as a larger monitor screen, a special office chair, or for taxis to work if you cannot take public transport.

How much you get depends on your circumstances. The money does not have to be paid back by you and will not affect your other benefits.

Your employer may also be responsible for some of the costs of your claim. Access to Work scheme can also give practical advice and guidance to employers to help them understand physical and mental ill health and how they can support employees.

For more information about how it can help you and whether you are eligible visit:
www.gov.uk/access-to-work

It is the individual rather than the employer that must claim for Access to Work funding.

How to claim

You can apply by calling Jobcentre Plus on:

Telephone: 0800 121 7479
Textphone: 0800 121 7579

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICE

The Access to Work Mental Health Support Service is a confidential service delivered by Remploy and funded by the Department for Work and Pensions. It is available at no charge to any employees with depression, anxiety, stress, or other mental health issues affecting their work.

Their trained experts will help you with:

- Nine months of work focused mental health support, matched to your needs
- Suitable coping strategies
- A support plan to help you stay in, or return to work
- Reasonable adjustments
- Advice for your employer on how to support people with a mental health condition

To qualify, you need to:

- Be in permanent or temporary employment (attending work or signed off)
- Have a mental health condition (diagnosed or undiagnosed) that has resulted in workplace absence or is causing difficulties to remain in work.

For more information, help and support:

Telephone: **0300 456 8114**
Email: *a2wmhss@remploy.co.uk*

DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

A **disciplinary procedure** is a formal way for an employer to deal with an employee's :

- Unacceptable or improper behaviour (misconduct)
- Performance (capability)

Before starting a disciplinary procedure, the employer should first try to resolve the problem informally. This can often be quicker and easier than taking a formal route. **Informal methods might include:**

- Privately speaking with the employee
- Listening to their point of view
- Agreeing improvements to be made
- Setting up a training or development plan if it is a performance issue

You should bring to your employer's attention if you believe you have not received adequate *training* to undertake your role, have not been provided with adequate *resources*, or have not been receiving adequate regular *supervision*, for example, to help you to prioritise work tasks and be clear about acceptable time frames for completion of tasks.

Dealing with Capability Issues

Capability or **performance** is about an employee's ability to do the job. Some employers have a separate procedure for dealing with performance issues, **that should be based upon offering:**

- Support
- Training
- Encouragement to improve

When the employer deals with the issue under a capability or disciplinary procedure, they must do so fairly.

Work Capability Issues and Mental Health

You may feel that your performance has been adversely affected by stress or poor mental health. For example, you may feel you have been under unrealistic time pressures from fielding too many demands, which has resulted in difficulty maintaining quality or accuracy in your work. Or it may be that your anxiety or depression has affected your ability to concentrate, and this has affected your work performance.

If you believe you are experiencing significant work stress, you should notify your employer that your health is being adversely affected by trying to meet the demands of your job, and you would like them to do something to help you. Try to ensure there is a paper trail of the date you notified your employer, so an email to your supervisor would be appropriate. Print it out and keep a dated hard copy, together with any subsequent correspondence. This may later be important if your work situation worsens and you need to prove that you brought the issues to your employer's attention, and they failed to take it seriously.

More information on the sources of work stress can be found in the appendix of this handbook, and at:

www.hse.gov.uk/stress/

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If you have not disclosed your health condition to your employer, and now find yourself facing informal or formal capability procedures, it may be worth now disclosing your health issues to them. You should explain how your health condition has made it more difficult for you to manage your role, specifically explain how you feel it has led to your poor performance. This could then entitle you to reasonable adjustments, for a temporary or permanent period, and should result in capability procedures being delayed or halted altogether. It may also lead to you receiving support from Occupational Health, who can be a helpful ally in discussing your issues and recommending adjustments to your employer.

Raising a Grievance

If an employee has a problem (**grievance**) at work, perhaps because they feel their employer has failed to support them adequately, after bringing an issue to their attention, they may raise a grievance. A grievance procedure is a formal way for an employee to raise a problem or complaint to their employer.

It is always a good idea to try to raise their issues informally first. This should be to your line manager initially. However, sometimes it is them that is the problem, in which case you will probably feel more comfortable speaking to another manager, to someone in HR, or even to another source or support such as a Mental Health First Aider, a Health & Wellbeing Representative, or even a Trade Union representative, if you are a member.

If an informal meeting is set up, it is a good idea to:

- Prepare what you want to say, for example how to explain what you are unhappy about
- Think about any potential solutions and what you would like your employer to do
- Check the ACAS website (see below) for information about your problem and how it might be dealt with
- You can ask for someone to go with you, such as a sympathetic work colleague, or a trade union representative. Brief them as to how you would like them to support you, for example, to call for 5 minutes time out if it becomes clear that you are getting stressed or upset

At the meeting you can:

- Explain what the problem is and what you think should happen
- Show your manager evidence if necessary, such as dates of relevant incidences, emails etc
- Take notes if you want to remember what was said
- The meeting should be a two-way process, so your manager gives you time to explain the problem, and you should also listen to what they have to say

It may be helpful to set a date to review agreed actions.

The employee can raise a formal grievance if:

- They feel that raising it informally has not worked
- They do not want it dealt with informally
- It is a very serious issue, for example bullying or sexual harassment

When an employee raises a formal grievance, their employer should follow a formal procedure, and adhere to the steps outlined in the ACAS Code of Practice, which can be found at:

www.acas.org.uk/acas-code-of-practice-on-disciplinary-and-grievance-procedures

Helpful Grievance Letter Templates can be found at:

www.acas.org.uk/grievance-letter-template

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

Workplace bullying can be a serious cause of workplace stress and mental ill health. Bullying may happen face to face, by letter, email or phone. Examples of bullying behaviour include:

- Spreading malicious rumours
- Unfair treatment
- Picking on or regularly undermining someone
- Denying someone's training or promotion opportunities

Definition of Bullying:

"Bullying is conduct that cannot be objectively justified by a reasonable code of conduct, and whose likely or actual cumulative effect is to threaten, undermine, constrain, humiliate or harm another person, or their property, reputation, self-esteem, self-confidence or ability to perform."

In cases where the bullying is coming from a supervisor or manager, it can sometimes be difficult to know the dividing line between tough management and bullying, and the bully is frequently expert at covering their tracks and appearing justified in their actions and behaviour.

It is important that you objectively recognise what is happening to you, and then know what action to take.
See the sections *Am I Being Bullied* and *Regaining Control* at the helpful website:

www.bullyonline.org

Bullying itself is not against the law, but harassment is. This is when the unwanted behaviour is related to one of the nine 'protected characteristics' as set out by the Equality Act (2010): age, sex, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation.

Definition of Harassment:

"Harassment is where someone creates an atmosphere that makes you feel uncomfortable – this could be because you feel offended, intimidated or humiliated."

Harassment might involve:

- Being verbally abused
- Being asked very personal questions about your disability or religion
- Being subjected to comments you find offensive or jokes of a sexual nature
- Rude physical gestures or facial expressions towards you

Even if the perpetrator or colleagues say the behaviour was just friendly banter, it might still be harassment in law. You must show that the behaviour you are complaining about was something you didn't want.
The law calls this 'unwanted conduct'.

You also need to show that the person who harassed you meant to make you feel a certain way, or that you felt that way, even though it was not their intention. This is called 'purpose or effect'. If the person did not mean to make you feel this way, it also has to be 'reasonable' that you felt that way.

You need to show that the purpose or the effect of the conduct was that it violated your dignity or created an environment that you found humiliating, offensive, intimidating, hostile or degrading.

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Employers are responsible for preventing bullying and harassment and are themselves liable (not just the perpetrator) for any harassment suffered by their employees. This is known as vicarious liability.

An employer needs to demonstrate that they have taken all reasonable steps to prevent the harassment. For example, this might be investigating a complaint and issuing a warning to the perpetrator.

ACAS has produced a helpful guidance leaflet on bullying and harassment, found at:

www.gov.uk/workplace-bullying-and-harassment

DISCLOSURE

Disclosure concerns the topic of whether to tell your employer about your mental health condition.

There are advantages and disadvantages to doing so, as well as more opportune and more risky times in your working life to make the disclosure. You need to weigh up the benefits and potential risks involved. Even though it is illegal to do so, there is a real risk that you could be discriminated against by your employer. Mental health conditions still carry a stigma, and you may find that too much emphasis might be placed upon the condition rather than your abilities.

Common concerns employees with mental health issues have about disclosing include:

- The employer may not respect confidentiality, it may become work gossip
- They may stereotype with stories they have seen in the media
- The employer may make assumptions about the person's work capability, based upon their health disclosure
- The employer may pass the person over for promotion or more challenging responsibilities
- They may assume the person will get easily upset, cry and be sensitive
- They may assume the person will take lots of sick days
- They may assume the person will be dangerous or difficult

However, many employees with mental health problems who have decided to disclose report that:

- They can get support if they become unwell
- It can prevent performance measures from being implemented
- They feel relieved at being able to be authentic – it can be exhausting hiding a mental illness
- It can show other team members that they too can be honest and share their differences
- It can openly explain any gaps in work history or career change
- It means the employer has a legal duty to consider 'reasonable adjustments' and to act in line with the Equality Act (2010) to prevent discrimination against you

A MIND Survey from 2017 found that over half (56%) of all respondents who disclose poor mental health at work are offered reasonable adjustments such as changes to working hours or adjusted job duties.

Disclosing when you are in work, or when you have successfully completed a probationary period, means that there is solid evidence of your skills and capabilities, and the employer and colleagues have got to know you as a person, with any medical label then coming second to who you are. By this time, you should also feel more confident about the work culture, its values and judgements, and have a sense of how it will be received.

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If you do decide to disclose...

- Consider how much (or how little) information your employer needs about your condition. It is often much less information than you think. There is no need to go into your whole history, better to focus on your health at the present time
- Consider the language you use, and try to focus on functional effects, and less on diagnosis. Such as, "my anxiety makes it difficult for me to deal with unexpected demands"
- Consider possible solutions too. Such as, "I would feel far happier if I was given notice of any changes happening to my workload, where possible"
- It may be helpful to explain about any medications you take, and how any side-effects of these might affect your functioning
- Your employer may want to know what support you receive, and to allow you time off to attend any therapy or medical appointments
- Your employer may feel reassured that they are doing all they should be, by requesting you attend an Occupational Health appointment, either in person or by telephone
- It may be helpful to share a Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) with your employer, particularly if you have a fluctuating mental health condition, that can cause you to lose insight of when you are becoming unwell

WELL-BEING RESOURCES

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

An Employee Assistance Programme is a service provided to employee's as a benefit by their employer and it can offer rapid access to counselling, therapy, and other services, depending upon the level of cover taken out by your employer. EAP's can often be a useful resource during times of workplace stress, burn-out, conflict at work and workplace change.

Please check to see whether your employer offers this benefit. Access to EAP's is usually quick and straight-forward. Any information shared with an EAP remains confidential, and will not be shared back to your employer.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a technique you can learn which involves making a special effort to notice what is happening in the present moment (in your mind, body, and surroundings) – without judging anything. It has its roots in Buddhism and mediation, but you don't have to be spiritual, or have any particular beliefs to try it.
It aims to help you by:

- Enabling you to separate from an overly busy mind and become more self-aware.
- May help you focus on breathing, helping you to feel calmer and less stressed.
- Feel more able to choose how to respond to your thoughts and feelings.
- Cope with difficult feelings and unhelpful thoughts / Be kinder towards yourself

For more information, go to:

https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mindfulness/

https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/drugs-and-treatments/mindfulness/about-mindfulness/

There are some excellent mindfulness apps you can download to your smart phone, including CALM, Headspace & Breethe, with some offering a free trial period and others some free resources.

Exercise

For information about how physical activity can help improve your mental health, go to:

https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/how-to-using-exercise

Diet

Understanding the relationship between what you eat and how you feel will also help you to improve your mental health and feelings of well-being, for more information, go to:

https://www.mind.org.uk/media-a/2929/food-and-mood-2017.pdf

USEFUL EMPLOYMENT HELPLINE NUMBERS

The Equality Advisory Support Service

This service provides information about Equality and Human Rights.

The resources section of the website provides some excellent template letter examples and guidance for various forms of workplace discrimination and issues including;

- Indirect discrimination
- Request to make reasonable adjustment
- Discrimination arising from disability
- Direct discrimination

www.equalityadvisoryservice.com
Advice line: 0808 800 0082
Textphone: 0808 800 0084
Open Monday and Friday between 9am - 7pm and Saturday from 10am to 2pm

ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service)

ACAS provides free and impartial information and advice to employers and employees on all aspects of workplace relations and employment law.

The website has lots of useful information for employees needing help and advice on various employment issues.

www.acas.org.uk
Helpline: 0300 123 1100 (Monday to Friday between 8am and 6pm)

USEFUL ORGANISATIONS

Mind

National charity providing lots of useful resources and information:

www.mind.org.uk
Information line: 0300 123 3393

Mental Health Foundation

Produces a useful series of how to guides which can be found on their website:

www.mentalhealth.org.uk

National Careers Service

THE NCS provides information, advice, and guidance to help you to make decisions on learning, training, and work. To speak to a career's advisor, call 0800 100 900, lines are open 8am-10pm 7 days a week.

https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/

Continues on next page…

Guidance for Workers with a disability

Your rights to equality at work produced by the Equality & Human Rights Commission:

Here is a link that takes you to all the available advice downloads:

http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/guidance-workers

And below there are several links that will take you to specific advice downloads:

When you apply for a job
https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/node/659

Working hours, flexible working and time off
https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/node/661

Pay and benefits
https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/node/656

Training, development, promotion and transfer
https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/node/657

Dismissal, redundancy, retirement and after you have left a job
https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/node/649

How to make sure everyone is treated fairly at work
https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/node/503

Pre-employment health questions guidance
https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/node/581

Telling people about your disability or health when you apply for a job
https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/node/680

WHERE TO GO FOR LEGAL ADVICE

Things to consider:
You will need to consider how your legal costs will be funded if using a private solicitor.

Please check your household insurance policy as sometimes these policies cover the legal cost of pursuing a 'work dispute' claim in the Employment Tribunal.

The insurers may try and insist on choosing a solicitor from their own panel. However, remember you have the freedom to select your own legal representative.

If you are on benefits or a low income and do not have much savings, you may be eligible for legal help.

To find a list of local solicitors who undertake Legal Help employment work, consult Community Legal Advice by searching on their website or telephone 0845 345 4345, suggestions may also be obtained from your local Citizens Advice Bureau.

Law Centres Federation (LCF)

Law Centres generally offer free advice and representation to full legal standards.

Not all law centres cover employment law, though most do.

For contact details of local law centres, telephone 020 7428 4400 or check:
www.lawcentres.org.uk

Citizens Advice Bureau

If there is no law centre in your local area, it is worth trying your local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB).

Free Representation Unit (FRU)

FRU is an organisation of volunteer law students, barristers and solicitors who offer free representation at the tribunal hearing. FRU can only be approached via a member organisation, for example CAB, law centre or other organisation such as Mind.

www.thefru.org.uk

Bar Pro Bono Unit

Bar Pro Bono Unit offers free tribunal representation for some cases. It cannot be approached directly by an individual; your case must be referred by a solicitor or advice agency.

www.weareadvocate.org.uk

Other representatives
The Employment Tribunal does not require advisors and representatives to have any legal qualifications. The important thing is their level of knowledge and experience.

SOME FINAL POINTERS

Some final points to consider if you are experiencing problems at work:

1) **Contract of employment** – it is important to understand how your written or oral employment contract establishes the rights and responsibilities for both yourself and your employer, as your rights at work are also affected by your employment status. Regardless of your employment status, if you are working, you should have an employment contract. While most employment contracts are in writing, they can also be verbal agreements. Oral contracts have the same legal authority, but it can be much harder to prove. Having a written contract provides more certainly over your status and can make it easier to resolve any disputes.

2) **Keep a diary** of everything that has happened and is happening to you at work. Writing down how you felt after each incident can often be cathartic and it also ensures that a record is kept which may be useful in supporting you further down the line, should you decide to take formal proceedings.

3) Look at your **relevant workplace policies and procedures** to ensure that your employer is adhering to them appropriately. Relevant policies/procedures might include Dignity at Work, Bullying and Harassment, Grievances, Occupational Health, Mental Health, Disability, Flexible Working, Mediation and Managing Sickness Absence.

4) It may be the case that your employer is **withholding critical information** which would support your case and/or you wish to gain access to the information held about you by your employer. You have the right to make a subject access request to the employer asking for information contained within your personnel file, occupational health reports and so on. For example, if you want to raise a grievance for disability discrimination, if you have not been receiving regular supervision, appraisal or other 'reasonable adjustments' a formal data access request can be utilised and used as evidence in an internal grievance and/or legal claim. There is a standard Subject Access Request template letter that can be used at the back of this guide (*Appendix 4*).

5) **Consider walking away** – if the situation at work becomes unbearable and your employer is doing nothing to combat the problem, then sometimes the most pragmatic thing to do is to change jobs. It is a POSITIVE decision not to have your career and life ruined and your health destroyed. However, remember that it is easier to get another job when you already have a job, so do not make precipitous decisions you may later regret, and leave with nothing else to go to.

APPENDIX # 1: WRAP

(WELLNESS RECOVERY ACTION PLAN) FOR WORK

Overview

This form is divided into 5 sections:

1. A daily maintenance Plan
2. Triggers
3. Early warning signs
4. Signs that a crisis is looming
5. Plan for getting back on track after a crisis

It has been designed to be completed by individuals who have experienced difficulties with their physical and / or emotional wellbeing, to support them to keep well in the workplace.

Ideally the form should be completed by you (**the employee**), however there may be times where you might find it beneficial to fill the form out together with a support provider, family member, friend or supportive line manager / colleague.

Employees can give a copy of the form to their employer. WRAPS can be a useful tool for discussion around need for support / reasonable adjustments. However even if you do not wish to share the form, completing it can still be a useful exercise. It can help to identify strategies to keep things on track and what to do if things start to slip. It can also be useful to re-visit the form regularly and make additions / amendments as necessary.

The WRAP comes from the Realising Ambitions report that was published in 2009. The report includes useful information about using the WRAP tool. **More information can be found by following this link:**

http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/realising-ambitions.pdf

This tool has been adapted to encompass a range of health conditions.

The report suggests that there is now a wealth of evidence showing that people can become experts in their own self-care through using the WRAP tool.

A WRAP for work might include plans for keeping well, dealing with difficulties that arise, managing ups and downs and returning to work after a crisis. These might usefully include self-management strategies – things that you can do for yourself – and ways in which your manager/employer can support this. If you choose to share your health condition with your employer/colleagues then the plan may also contain ways in which they might help and guidance about what they can do if problems arise.

Adapted from "Realising Ambitions: Better employment support for people with a mental health condition" to include a range of health conditions. The report was written by: Rachel Perkins, Paul Farmer and Paul Litchfield. Department of Work & Pensions, Dec 2009.

Continues on next page...

APPENDIX # 1: **WRAP**

CURRENT WORK – THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE COMPLETING THE FORM

MAIN DUTIES / RESPONSIBILITIES:

ASPECTS OF THE ROLE THAT ARE MOST ENJOYABLE / REWARDING:

ASPECTS OF THE ROLE THAT ARE MOST CHALLENGING / DEMANDING:

Continues on next page...

APPENDIX # 1: **WRAP**

NAME:	**DATE:**

1. A DAILY MAINTENANCE PLAN: (MY PLAN FOR KEEPING ON AN EVEN KEEL AT WORK)

How I am / what I am like when I am on an even keel – a typical 'good day', or a day where I look after myself:
(eg: Enthusiastic, sociable, quiet, good time keeper).

What I can do to keep myself on an even keel at work: (eg: Go to bed before 11pm on week-nights, go out for a lunch break, keep a list of things people ask me to do in a note-book so I don't forget, and so I can see what I have done. Say no to tasks that could cause me harm, be aware of and respect physical limitations, use equipment to avoid injury).

What my manager (and/or colleagues) can do to help – 'reasonable adjustments' – to keep me on an even keel:
(eg: Provide weekly feedback / supervision so I know how I am doing, give me clear instructions about what I am supposed to do, let me tell them if I feel I have too much to do and help me prioritise things. Acknowledge the health condition; don't expect me to perform beyond my physical capabilities. Follow correct policies / procedures, ensure appropriate equipment is available).

Continue to:

Begin:

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2. TRIGGERS – THINGS THAT HAPPEN TO KNOCK ME OFF BALANCE: (THINGS THAT MAKE ME FEEL ANXIOUS, MISERABLE, DISCOURAGED ETC.)

What are the things that upset me / cause pain or discomfort – either things at work or things at home that may get in the way of my work? (eg: People criticising me, having too many things to do, arguments at home. Activities that can cause problems such as pain or injury).

What I can do to keep on an even keel; when 'triggers' occur: (eg: Tell myself no-one gets it right all the time and remind myself of the things I have done well, prioritise – decide which things are most urgent and do these first or ask my manager/a colleague what I should prioritise, talk to my friend about problems at home so I don't bottle them up. Be aware of activity levels, avoid a cycle of under / over activity. Conduct risk assessments of activities, do stretches / exercises, use appropriate treatments eg: massage).

What my manager (and/or colleagues) can do to help me stay on an even keel when 'triggers' occur:
(If you are not happy with something I have done please take me aside and tell me quietly and remind me of things that I have done well so I don't feel too discouraged, ask what I have got on already before giving me new things to do. Acknowledge health condition, offer flexibility in working pattern / routine, support self management strategies eg: time to stretch, or take a short break).

Continue to:

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3. EARLY WARNING SIGNS: (SUBTLE CHANGES IN MY THOUGHTS, FEELINGS OR BEHAVIOUR THAT TELL ME THINGS ARE NOT QUITE RIGHT)

What are my early signs that all is not well?

What do I notice? (eg: Feeling irritable or oversensitive, feeling I am failing at everything, having difficulties getting to sleep, concentrating, eating too much. Increase in pain, fatigue or medication use).

What might my colleagues notice? (eg: Not being as sociable as I usually am, asking for reassurance that what I am doing is right. Irritable, tired or struggling to complete tasks).

What I can do when I notice my early warning signs (eg: Make sure I go home on time and have a quiet evening – watch one of my favourite films, talk to my support network about what is on my mind, go to the gym after work. Use self management strategies, medication or access GP / other services).

What my manager (and/or colleagues) can do to help me if they notice my early warning signs. (eg: Don't make a fuss or jump to conclusions – everyone has their ups and downs, don't keep asking if I'm alright, don't feel offended if I am not as chatty as I usually am, make a point of thanking me for things I have done/pointing out the things I have done well. Acknowledge health condition, offer flexibility in working pattern / routine, support self management strategies eg: time to stretch, or take a short break).

Continue to:

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4. SIGNS THAT A CRISIS IS LOOMING: (CHANGES IN MY THOUGHTS, FEELINGS OR BEHAVIOUR THAT TELLS ME THINGS ARE BREAKING DOWN))

What are my early signs that a crisis is looming?

What do I notice? (eg: Racing thoughts, believing that everyone is against me, feeling unable to get out of bed and face the day, drinking too much, over-reacting to ordinary everyday things. Increase in pain / fatigue, taking more time off work, visiting GP / other services more frequently).

What might my manager (and/or colleagues) notice? (eg: Bursting into tears, getting snappy and irritable, being late for work in the morning, having difficulty doing things I normally take in my stride. Tired, distracted or struggling to complete tasks, taking more time off work).

What I can do when I notice my signs that a crisis is looming? (eg: Talk to my support network, go and see my doctor, go somewhere quiet for half an hour, ask my manager to relieve me of some of my responsibilities, if I can work from home some days, reduce my hours, say I need a few days off, tell my colleagues I am not feeling so good. Use self management strategies, use medication).

What my manager (and/or colleagues) can do to help me if they notice my signs that a crisis is looming.
(eg: Ask me if things are OK, say they are worried about me, suggest I cut down my workload/work from home/take a few days off, suggest I go see my doctor, offer to call someone within my support network, reassure me that even if I do need to take a bit of time out they still want me to work there. Acknowledge health condition, offer flexibility in working pattern / routine, support self management strategies eg: time to stretch, or take a short break).

Continue to:

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5. PLAN FOR GETTING BACK ON TRACK AFTER A CRISIS:

If possible, have a plan agreed with my manager about how I will go back to work if I have been off sick/ how I will gradually build up my duties again: (eg: I go into work for a visit, take some work home to catch up on what I have missed, start on limited hours, gradually build them up, relief from some responsibilities that I find hard – like going to meetings – and gradually take them on again. Say no to tasks that could cause me harm, be aware of and respect physical limitations, use equipment to avoid injury, don't take on too much too soon).

What can I do? (eg: Ask someone from my support network to tell my manager that I will not be in, keep in touch with him/her to let them know how I am doing – ask my named person to do this if I can't, remind myself that I will get through it, contact my manager and enact agreed plan/make plans for gradually getting back to work. Use self management strategies / support services).

What my manager (and/or colleagues) can do: (eg: Keep in touch while I am off – like send a card or call to see how I am), remind me that they want me back, enact agreed plan/make a plan for gradually getting back to work, don't avoid talking about what has happened when I get back – embarrassed silences are really difficult, don't keep asking how I am – don't treat me like an invalid. Acknowledge health condition, offer flexibility in working pattern / routine, support self management strategies eg: time to stretch, or take a short break).

Continue to:

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APPENDIX # 2: STRAIN AUDIT

The Strain Audit is a tool to help you think more systematically about the specific causes of stress in your job and working life. Take some time to score each individual factor for the amount of stress it causes you. Those factors which have scored up in the 8/9/10 region are likely to be those issues that need to be raised up for discussion with your line manager. These things may be made more managable by use of workplace adjustments.

ISSUES	LOW STRAIN									HIGH STRAIN
Lack of workspace:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Travel in the course of work:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Working hours:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Working out of hours:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Going to meetings:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Rigid work schedule:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Unpredictable hours:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Unsocial hours:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Job description:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Employer expectations:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Communication with superiors:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Communication with peers:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Relationship with superiors:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Relationships with peers:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Access to others in order to complete tasks:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Access to resources to complete tasks:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Organisational culture:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Being kept informed:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Power/Lack of Power:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Different managers want different things of you:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Conflicting organisational roles:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Conflict with personal values:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Responsibility for others:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Responsibility for material things:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

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APPENDIX # 2: STRAIN AUDIT

ISSUES	LOW STRAIN									HIGH STRAIN
Lack of career structure:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Good job/person match:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Job status;	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Adequate skills for job;	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Fear of redundancy:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Control over work:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
General autonomy:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Participation in decision-making:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Management listening to what you say:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Isolation:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Bullying / Harassment:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Meaningful work:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Job variety:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Repetitive work:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Work sufficiently challenging:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Work too challenging:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Exposure to customers/clients:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Too much work to do:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Too little work to do:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Pace of work:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Technology:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Adequate training:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Feedback from managers:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Career development opportunities:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Convenient access to exercise Facilities:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

APPENDIX # 3:

SOLUTIONS TO WORKPLACE AND ORGANISATIONAL STRESSORS

The HSE has identified six broad areas of workplace stress:

- **Demands** – includes issues like workload, work pattern and the work environment
- **Control** – How much say the person has in the way they do their work
- **Support** – Includes the encouragement and resources provided by the organisation, line management and work peers
- **Relationships** – Includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviours such as bullying and harassment
- **Role** - Whether people understand their role within the organisation, and whether the organisation ensures the person does not have conflicting roles
- **Change** – How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated within the organisation
- **Reward and Contribution** – Includes pay, benefits, reward and positive feedback mechanisms

See also the *Strain Audit* – for more closely identifying hot spots of a person's job.

What are the positive ways for employers and organisations to deal more effectively with work stress?
The following suggestions are all organisational (rather than individual) ways of minimising stress. These ideas are all constructive solutions and strategies to be aware of – remember that in pointing out solutions, you are not only helping to alleviate the stress for yourself; it will have a beneficial effect upon everyone in that particular area of work too – good mental health for us all!

Demands

- Ensure there are sufficient resources (people with appropriate skills and equipment) to do the work allocated
- If people are under-loaded, think about giving them more responsibilities, but ensure they have been adequately trained
- Identify training and development needs
- Departmental and line managers need to encourage staff to raise concerns
- Develop a system to notify employees of any unplanned tight deadlines and any exceptional need to work long hours
- Minimise any risks and stresses arising from the work environment, ensure the workplace is appropriately designed and laid out to ensure staff can do their jobs efficiently and without harm to themselves or others
- Regular risk assessment and control of physical violence and verbal abuse, support staff subject to this (front line staff usually) through clear policies of zero tolerance

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APPENDIX # 3:

SOLUTIONS TO WORKPLACE AND ORGANISATIONAL STRESSORS

Control

- Consult staff on decisions that affect their jobs and enable staff views and ideas to be taken into account
- Give staff more control by enabling them to plan their own work wherever possible, and make decisions about how that work should be completed and how problems should be tackled (e.g., through project meetings, 1:1's and performance reviews)
- Promote flexible working policies to enable staff to better manage work-life balance

Support

- Hold regular team / departmental meetings to discuss team pressures
- Clarify procedures for raising concerns at an early stage and ensure line managers have knowledge of staff well-being services, such as Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)
- Include 'work-related stress/emerging pressures' as a standing item in team meetings, IPR's and supervision
- Give support and positive encouragement to staff, even when things go wrong
- Value diversity – prevent discrimination on race, sex, or disability grounds

Relationships

- Create a culture where members of the team trust each other and feel they are fairly treated
- Encourage staff to recognise the individual contributions of other team members and the benefits of the whole team pulling together
- Encourage good team communication and provide appropriate training to aid skill development (for example, people management, listening skills, confidence building)
- Publicise policies and procedures to reduce or eliminate harassment and bullying and agree a confidential reporting system to enable the reporting of unacceptable behaviour.

Role

- Ensure all staff have a clearly defined role and introduce or revise job descriptions to clarify core functions and priorities of the post
- Include on team meeting agendas regular review of roles and responsibilities of all members of team, to clarify changes, and ensure no role conflict
- Make sure all staff receive a comprehensive induction
- If the organisation has gone through change, check with members of your team to make sure they understand their new roles and are comfortable with them
- In teams which have been downsized or members are off on long term sick leave, ensure staff are happy to take on new roles, and clarify whether this is temporary or permanent. Assess need for additional training or support

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APPENDIX # 3:

SOLUTIONS TO WORKPLACE AND ORGANISATIONAL STRESSORS

Change

- Ensure all staff are aware of why the change is happening – agree and implement a system for doing this
- Face to face communication is generally best, so staff have the opportunity to ask questions, voice concerns and say how they feel
- Major changes affect staff member's sense of job security. Explain what the organisation wants to achieve and why it is necessary for the change to take place – explain the timetable for action and what the first steps will be. Be up front about things like the need for re-location, redundancy, downsizing, and changes in terms and conditions
- Involves staff in discussions, and ensure support is available for all staff affected by change
- Revise risk assessments / stress auditing to see if any changes – such as a decrease in staff numbers - have resulted in increased hazards to staff

Reward and Contribution

- Provide employees with regular feedback on performance, when they do well, as well as when they don't. Create a culture where there is regular informal as well as formal feedback from managers and colleagues
- Improved reward need not necessarily involve increased salaries – it could mean increased opportunities for flexible working, childcare provision, reduced/ free membership to local gyms and leisure centres, social events, investment in and supporting staff to develop careers and skills through training

APPENDIX # 4:

SUBJECT ACCESS REQUEST TEMPLATE LETTER

[Name and address of the organisation]

[Your name and full postal address]

[Your contact number]
[Your email address]

[The date]

Dear Sir or Madam

Subject access request

[Include your full name and other relevant details to help identify you].

Please supply the personal data you hold about me, which I am entitled to receive under data protection law, held in:

[Give specific details of where to search for the personal data you want, for example:

- my personnel file
- emails between 'person A' and 'person B' (from 1 June 2017 to 1 Sept 2017)
- my medical records (between 2014 and 2017) held by 'Dr C' at 'hospital D'
- the CCTV camera situated at ('location E') on 23 May 2017 between 11am and 5pm
- financial statements (between 2013 and 2017) held in account number xxxxx.

If you need any more information, please let me know as soon as possible.
[If relevant, state whether you would prefer to receive the data in a particular electronic format or printed out].

It may be helpful for you to know that data protection law requires you to respond to a request for personal data within one calendar month.

If you do not normally deal with these requests, please pass this letter to your data protection officer or relevant staff member.

If you need advice on dealing with this request, the Information Commissioner's Office can assist you. Its website is *ico.org.uk*, or it can be contacted on 0303 123 1113.

Yours faithfully
[Signature]

Job Retention Advice and Guidance

Helping you to stay in employment

www.jobretention.org.uk