

NEU ONLINE STRESS SURVEY GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL OFFICERS, REPS AND SAFETY REPS



The NEU offer an online staff stress survey as a resource for local officers, reps and safety reps to assist them gather evidence about stress levels within a school and establish the causes and impact of this workplace stress. This information can be presented to school management as evidence of the extent of a problem, especially when industrial action is being considered. There is also a stress survey tailored for use in sixth form and further education colleges and details of how to access this are available [here](#).

The process for undertaking the survey is as follows:

1. The local officer, workplace rep or safety rep can make a request to NEU HQ for the survey to be undertaken at the school in question. A brief 'Stress Survey Request Form' should be completed by and emailed to Cheryl Farnum (cheryl.farnum@neu.org.uk). The form is available [online](#) or via email from Cheryl. The form asks for the school's details, the survey deadline and if member email addresses are required.
2. Once the completed form has been received by NEU HQ, an online link for the survey, specific to the school, will be generated and provided via email.
3. The local officer or rep can email the link to all members/employees in the school and ask them to complete the survey before the deadline.
4. Once the deadline has been reached, NEU HQ will close the survey link and email the local officer or rep a breakdown of all the results for the school. While the NEU will request equality monitoring information from the survey respondents, this information will not be available at a local level as it could allow members to be identified by management.

Workplace reps and safety reps are able to request access to the survey directly from NEU HQ. However, they may also approach a branch or district local officer such as the health and safety adviser for support in undertaking the survey as part of a stress audit. If there is no rep or safety rep in a school, the local officer can undertake the survey. Local officers should also consider publicising the service to reps in their local newsletters and communications.

Member email addresses can be provided by NEU HQ to local officers or appointed reps and this should be indicated on the request form. It is important to be aware that members may have changed their email addresses, so where possible, local officers and reps should confirm with members directly which email address should be used.

The national stress survey was developed in close consultation with the Health and Safety Working Group, and the questions are structured around each of the six HSE 'management standards' for workplace stress. The management standards are key risk factors which have been identified as the causes of workplace stress. Structuring the survey in this format will allow local officers and reps to identify the main causes of stress within a school, and to work with management and members to bring about change in these areas.

It is possible that the survey format will not suit every circumstance, and local officers and reps may wish to ask specific questions, depending on the issues within a school. It is not possible to amend the national stress survey, as doing so would have implications for other schools running the survey simultaneously. In these situations, the local officer or rep would need to compile a separate survey. Details of how to do so, along with survey templates are available in the NEU's [Tackling Stress briefing](#).

The survey can be sent to all teachers within a school, not just those who are NEU members, subject to the agreement of the other unions' representatives. However, if the survey is distributed more widely, it will not be possible to separate the results by union membership.

Appendix 1 lists the questions and text included in the online survey.

Appendix 1 - Format of the NEU online stress survey

Page 1 – Introduction

It is widely recognised that education employees are amongst the most stressed workers in Britain. Although stress is not a disease, it is recognised that when pressure becomes excessive or prolonged, it can be a cause of physical or mental illness.

The Health and Safety Executive recommends 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.

The Management Standards use six key risk factors - or 'stressors' - which have been identified as causes of work-related stress. These are:

the demands of your job;	the control you have over your work;
the support you receive from managers/colleagues;	your relationships at work;
your role in the organisation;	change and how it is managed.

The purpose of this survey is to discover and highlight the extent, causes and impact of work related stress in your workplace. The questions in this survey are categorised according to each of the HSE Management Standards; this will help us analyse the main causes of stress in your school/college. Collectively, the evidence gathered can then be used to bring about change. This is a confidential survey that should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. You will not be identified from your responses.

Members wishing to discuss individual issues or concerns can find contact details at the end of the survey.

Page 2 – Demands

Respondents will be asked to rate each statement with one of the following:
Strongly disagree, Disagree, Ambivalent, Agree, Strongly Agree

1. My physical working conditions are acceptable
2. Our facilities to rest and eat meals are clean and well maintained
3. My total working hours are acceptable
4. The number of after school meetings is manageable
5. Deadlines and time pressures are achievable and reasonable
6. I cope well with the pressures of Ofsted/Estyn inspections
7. My balance between work and home life is about right

8. I am able to take a proper break during the school day
9. Lesson planning requirements are realistic
10. Marking requirements are sensible and not overly bureaucratic

Page 3 – Control

11. I have opportunities to express my ideas and points of view
12. I have enough time to carry out all of my tasks
13. Lesson observation is reasonable
14. I am encouraged to use my skills and initiative to teach and work independently

Page 4 – Support

15. I receive appropriate training
16. My managers are supportive
17. I regularly receive positive feedback on my own work
18. There are enough support staff in the school
19. The school benefits from effective leadership
20. The appraisal system is supportive rather than punitive

Page 5 – Relationships

21. I have a good relationship with my line manager
22. I get on well with colleagues
23. Staff are able to raise concerns and/or complain without risk of repercussions

- 24. I rarely have to deal with disruptive pupils
- 25. I rarely have to deal with violent pupils
- 26. I do not worry about violence from aggressive parents

Page 6 – Role

- 27. I'm clear about what is expected of me at work
- 28. My skills are well-used
- 29. I feel valued in my role

Page 7 – Change

- 30. I can cope with the pace of organisational and/or curriculum change
- 31. There is full staff consultation when any significant change is proposed
- 32. Changes are accompanied by appropriate support and training, where necessary

Page 8 – Stress symptoms

33. The following are symptoms of stress. Please tick all symptoms you have experienced in the last 12 months which you attribute to stress at work.

Headaches

Anxiety

Mood changes

Disturbed sleep pattern

Skin problems

Digestion problems

Increased consumption of alcohol or caffeine

Increased blood pressure

Change in appetite

I have not experienced any symptoms of work-related stress

Other

Page 9 – Further Issues

34. Do you attribute your stress to any of the following workplace factors?

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/Estyn pressures

Unlawful discrimination (in relation to one or more protected characteristic: age, transgender, marriage or civil partnership,

pregnancy or childbirth, disability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation)

Other

35. In the last 12 months, have you considered, or are you now considering leaving your school or the education profession, either partly or fully because of workplace stress?

Yes, considering leaving my school

Yes, considering leaving the education profession

No, not considering leaving at this time

36. Please list any further work-related factors which cause you stress.

Page 10 – About you

This is a confidential survey; you do not need to give us your name or membership number. However, the NEU would like to collect some information about you; this will only be used at a national level to carry out analysis and will not be given to your local rep or division. Please leave these questions blank if you would prefer not to answer.

Page 11 – Next Steps

If there are any individual issues or concerns you would like to discuss, you can speak to your school rep or safety rep, a local NEU officer, or the [NEU Adviceline](#).