

**WORK** *stress*

The UK National Work-stress Network ● [workstress.net](http://workstress.net)

# UK National Work-Stress Network

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November 2010  
Annual Conference

*Stress Prevention to  
Secure an effective  
workplace*



Looking Back – Looking Forward  
Ian Draper, Work Stress Network



No one should leave work  
at the end of the day, less  
healthy than they were  
when they arrived .....

**Work should be health-  
enhancing**

**TUC Vision**

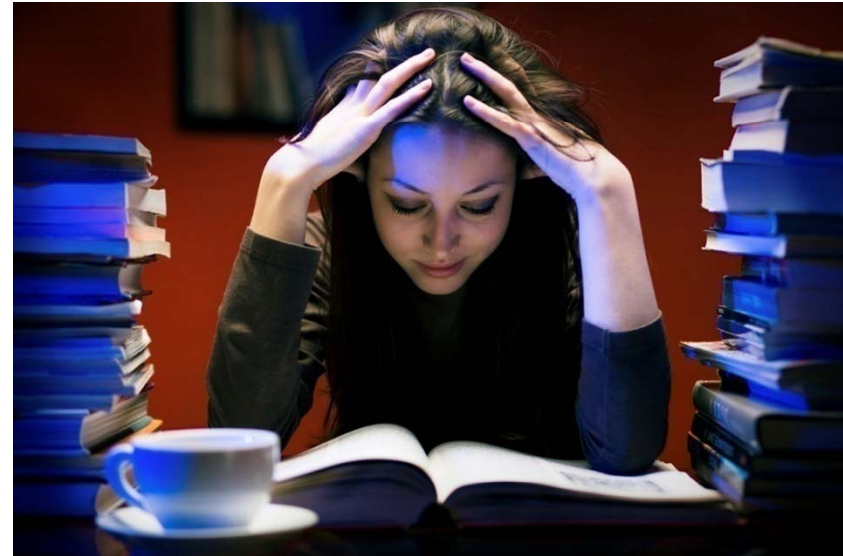


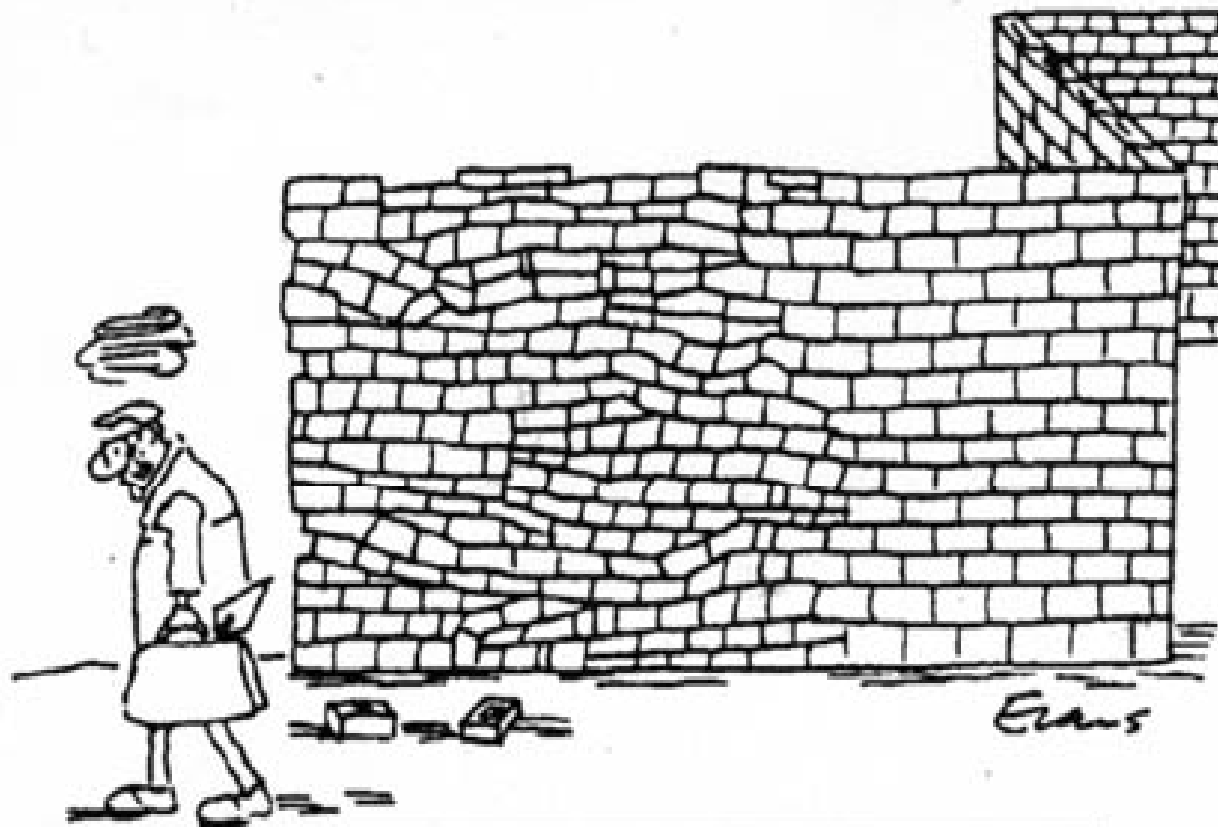
# Definition of Stress

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## HSE definition

*“the adverse reaction people have to **excessive pressures** or other types of demand placed upon them”*





long hours and too much pressure  
are not good for you or your work

# TUC Safety Representative Surveys

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<b>Stress Listed</b>	56%	58%	61%	60%	62%
<b>Stress Factors</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2010</b>
<b>Workload</b>	80%	79%	76%	73%	
<b>Staffing Cuts</b>	50%	49%	57%	58%	
<b>Change</b>	52%	47%	53%	50%	
<b>Long Hours</b>	41%	37%	34%	35%	21%
<b>Bullying</b>	28%	27%	33%	40%	37%

# NICE Information November 2009

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- NICE advice and data to employers on the need for their vigilance over Stress-related illness
- **13.7 million working days lost each year** due to work-related mental health conditions including stress, depression and anxiety which are currently estimated to cost UK employers around **£28.3 billion per year at current pay levels.**
- By following the recommendations an average organisation of 1000 employees can expect to save an estimated £250,000 a year, due to reduced absenteeism and increased performance.
- Nationally private sector believes overall sick-leave costs £1.75 billion with the loss of 25 million working days.

# HSE Figures 2009/10

- **Key annual figures 2009/10**
- **1.3 million** people who worked during the last year were suffering from an illness (long standing as well as new cases) they believed was caused or made worse by their current or past work. **555 000** of these were new cases.
- **152** workers were killed at work, a rate of **0.5** per 100 000 workers.
- **121 430** other injuries to employees were reported under RIDDOR, a rate of 473 per 100 000 employees.
- **233 000** reportable injuries occurred, according to the Labour Force Survey, a rate of 840 per 100 000 workers.
- **28.5 million** days were lost overall (1.2 days per worker), 23.4 million due to work-related ill health and 5.1 million due to workplace injury.

# Stress and Mental Health: the scale of the problem

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- 11 million working age people are affected by mental health problems
- The cost GB economy > £40 million year
- In England, these cost:
  - £15.1 billion due to presenteeism
  - £8.4 billion due to absenteeism
- Compared with other disorders, mental health problems account for more:
  - claimants of incapacity benefit (41% of
  - new claimants of DLA (23% of the total)

(Royal Coll of Psych)

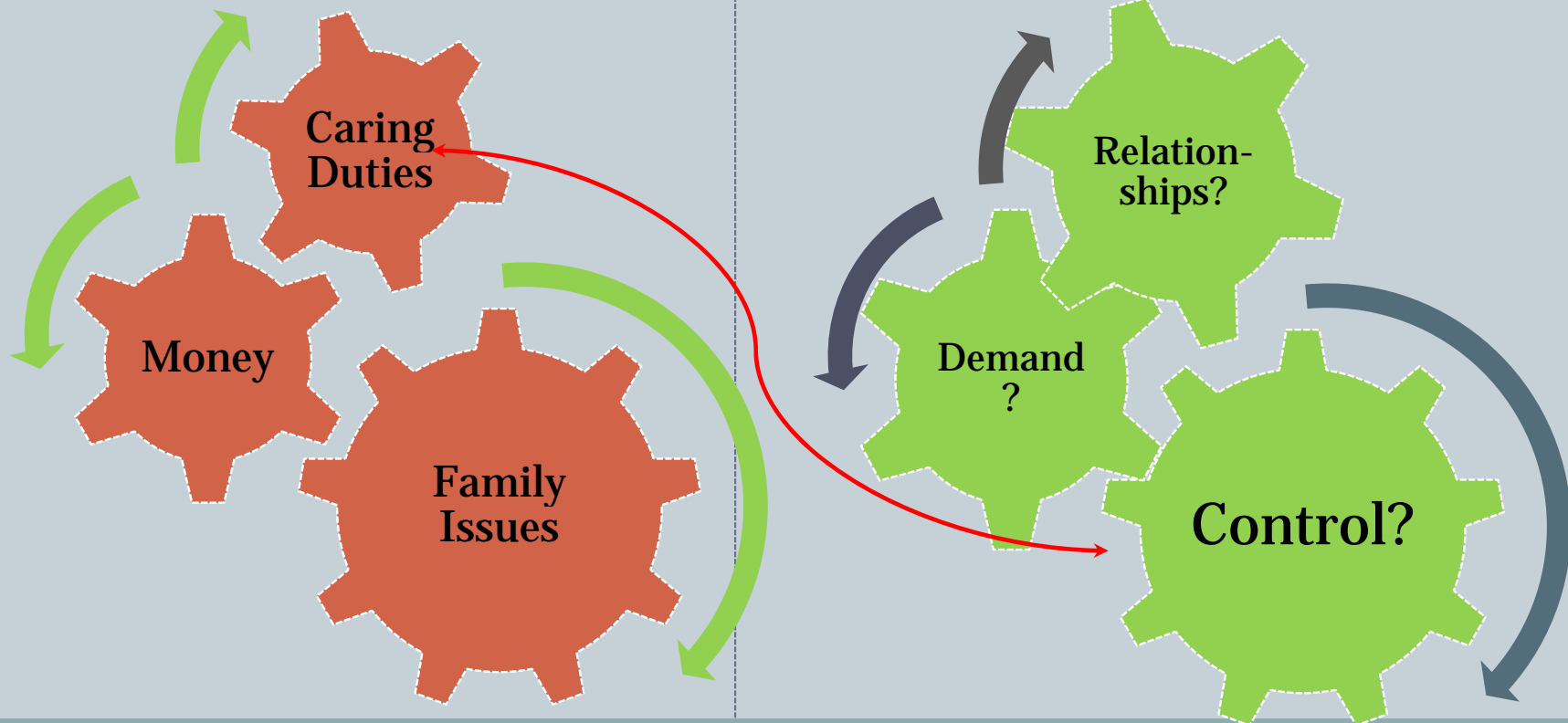
# What causes stress?

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## Personal Stress

## Work-Stress



# Putting the figures straight

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- **Hazards and other authority estimates of those killed each year in work-related incidents (pre-recession figs)**
- 1,367 – 1,517 killed in work related incidents every year made up of:
- HSE figs of the 152 workers that are reported to HSE and Local Authorities via RIDDOR,
- Members of the public killed by work activity = 85
- Workers killed at sea and in the air – estimated at 30 a year
- About 1,000 in work-related road traffic incidents
- About 100-250 suicides due to the pressures of work

# Putting the figures straight

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## **Hazards and other authority estimates of those killed by work-related illness each year**

- Includes **18,000** by work-related cancer at 12% (8-16%) at least 5,000 due to asbestos cancers
- Heart Disease – 20% of deaths work related due to stress, long hours, shift work = up to **20,000**
- Respiratory Illness -15-20% of obstructive lung disease = about **6,000**
- Other diseases inc. restrictive lung diseases = about **6,000**
- **Giving Total of up to 50,000 per year-**

# Stress and the Recession



**Pay freezes**  
**Pensions attacks**  
**Job losses**  
**Longer hours**  
**Reduction in Public Sector services**  
**Attacks on Benefits**  
**Continued highly inflated salaries and bonus payments**  
**Excessive work pressures and demands on those left in post**

- Low and falling Morale at work?
- Employers shying further away from duty of care on basis of cost?
- Never a better time for more support?
- Enforced presenteeism to 'keep up with the team', and to protect your job?
- Bad managers having a field day?
- More opportunities for workplace bullies
- Inappropriate self-support measures?
- Never a better time for the Management Standards to be applied and enforced?

# Devising a workplace strategy

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## Organisational justice

“Organisational injustice is a workplace stressor

*High levels of organisational injustice have been shown to be associated with poor physical and mental health, sickness absence and disease...Higher levels of justice improve health and decrease sickness absence as well as improving organisational outcomes”*

**Procedural Justice:** decision making procedures should include input from affected parties, be consistently applied, open and ethical

**Relational Justice:** respectful and considerate treatment of workers and employees by their supervisors” (Dr Jane Ferrie, Whitehall II, 2008)

# Devising a workplace strategy

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## How to address stress: some crucial elements

- **Involve everyone right from the beginning—get everyone to identify the problems and the solutions.**
- **If you can't get management on board, involve everyone else!**

# The three stage process

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- ***1<sup>st</sup> Stage – Monitoring and risk assessment through acknowledging responsibility***
- ***2<sup>nd</sup> Stage – Collective processes and facilities to ensure support***
- ***3<sup>rd</sup> Stage – individual coping strategies and sticking plasters – **TOO LATE*****
- ***“It's all very well an organisation being good at dealing with stress when it occurs. It would be better practice, however, to avoid placing workers in stressful situations in the first place.”***

# HSE Stress Management Standards

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**Demand**

**Control**

**Support**

**Relationships**

**Role**

**Organisational  
Change**

- Continued extensive ignorance and lack of knowledge of them
- They are useful and can work
- Need for greater promotion
- They need toughening up and more enforcement
- Employers **must** be **REQUIRED** to implement them
- Direct responsibilities for CEO, Board, Directors & Managers etc
- Greater Penalties for failure to act on stress

# Legal Duties and Enforcement

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- HASAWA 1974
- Management and associated Regs 1990s
- Common Law Duties
- Education and guidance should be backed up by strong effective enforcement
- HSE approach is too softly softly
- HSE cuts of 35% = further reduced ability to respond
- Deregulation climate too dangerous

# Safe and Unsafe Workplaces?

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- “Offices, Schools and Shops are *safe workplaces* . . .”
- Home working is considered low risk to be exempted from risk assessment
- Young Report completely ignores the evidence of mental health issues
- Young Report protects employers over employees
- Government cuts to HSE reduces its effectiveness and ability to inspect workplaces and incidents
- What is low risk employment and how is it defined?

We should all set out to achieve

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**Caring supportive  
cultures through  
dignity for all in the  
workplace**

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