

---

# Tackling Workplace Stress HSE Management Standards Approach

(Adapted from material supplied by  
HSE)

---

# Why does it matter?

What do we know about ...

 Find out more about **Stress statistics**

 Find out more about **Stress controls**

10.8 million  
working  
days lost

2010/11 statistics  
new cases: 211 000  
Pre-existing cases  
189 000

Higher  
rates for  
women than  
men

Highest rates  
in the largest  
workplaces  
(>250 employees)

# Work-related Stress?

Highest rates  
in managerial and  
professional  
occupations

Highest rates  
in public administration,  
health and social care  
and education

Higher  
rates for middle aged  
workers  
(ages 35 to 54)



Work-related **STRESS**



# How do we tackle the problem of work stress?

---

- Getting started
  - Gaining employer/ senior management commitment
  - Understanding the organisational drivers
  - The setting up of steering groups
- Comprehensive risk assessment
  - The Management Standards Approach
- Embedding the approach
  - Review of existing policies & procedures based on interventions
  - Continuous improvement

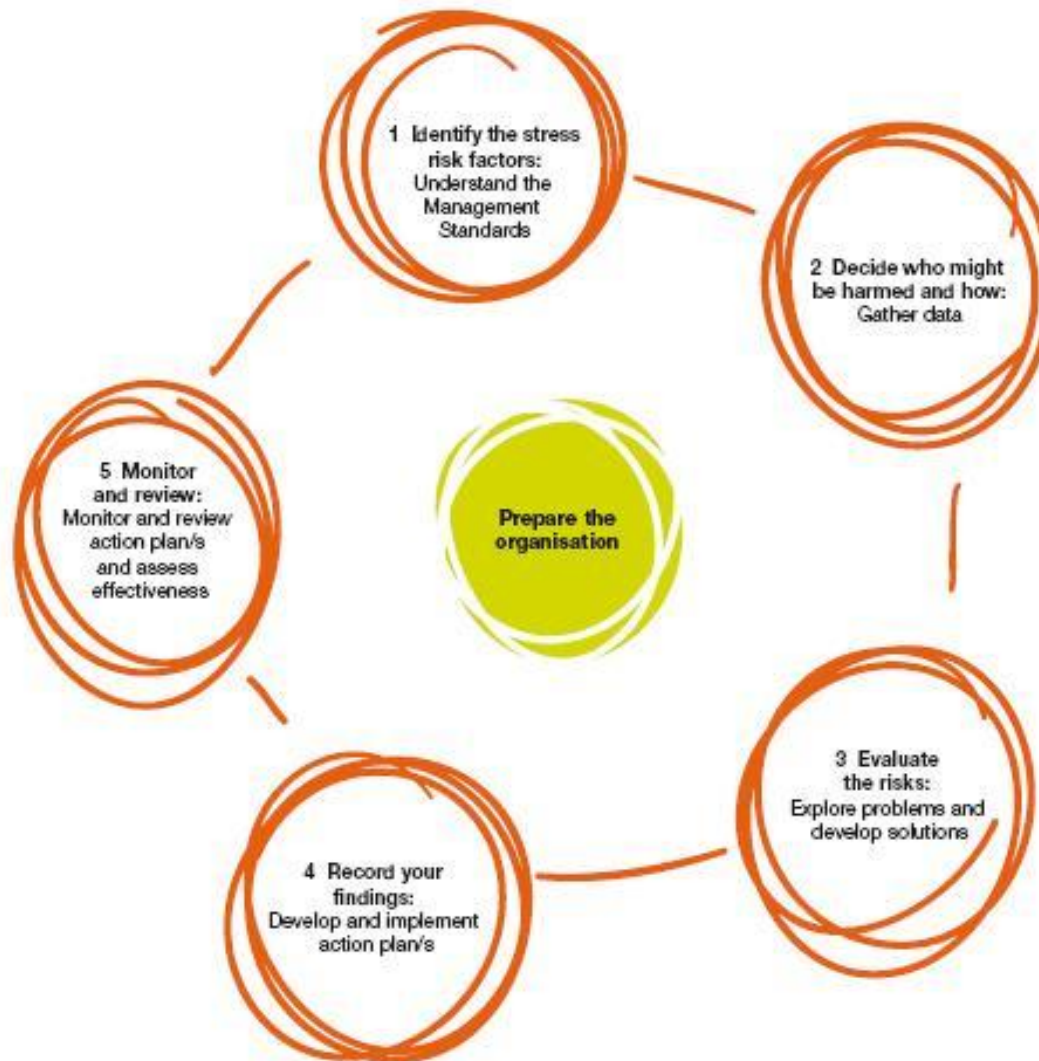
# Challenge 1: Gaining the commitment of the employer/ senior management

---

- Demonstrating that a problem exists.
  - Internal TU audit?
  - Absence records?
  - What else?
- Setting out the moral case for action.
- Setting out the legal case for action.
- Setting out the business case for action.

# The Management Standards Approach

**HSG218 (2007)**



# Getting started

---

## The legal case:

- The Management Standards are guidance, however, employers already have duties:
  - Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999: To assess the risk of stress-related ill health arising from work activities.
  - Under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974: To take measures to control that risk.

# Getting started

---

## Moral case:

- There is evidence that prolonged periods of excessive pressure have an adverse effect on health
- Research provides strong links between stress and physical effects such as heart disease, back pain, headaches, gastrointestinal disturbances or various minor illnesses; and psychological effects such as anxiety and depression
- Poor coping strategies can also lead to other behaviours that are harmful to health, such as skipping meals, drinking too much caffeine or alcohol, or smoking.



# Getting started.

---

The business case:

- Employee commitment to work
- Staff performance and productivity
- Attendance levels
- Staff recruitment and retention
- Customer satisfaction
- Organisational image and reputation
- Potential litigation

# Challenge 2: Setting up a steering group

---

SAFETY COMMITTEE or OTHER GROUP?

Membership:

Management

- Senior management
- Health & safety manager
- Human resources
- Occupational Health
- Line management

Employee

- Trade unions representative
- AN Other (Employee group representative?)

# Steering group – key roles

---

## **Project Champion:**

- Represents the project at Board level
- Updates the Board on progress
- Ensures the project is adequately resourced

## **Day-to-day Champion:**

- Takes the role of project manager
- Organises and facilitates meetings
- Documents decisions to provide an audit trail
- Keeps the project on schedule and on budget

# Steering group – key activities

---

- Planning and Managing the project
- Securing necessary resources
- Communicating with those involved
- Monitoring progress
- Approving action
- Reporting
- Any others?

# Steering group – Communications

---

## Methods of communication:

- Briefing groups
- Intranet
- Newsletters
- Notice boards
- Email – be cautious
- Individual memos and letters
- Newspapers
- Any others?

# Steering Groups

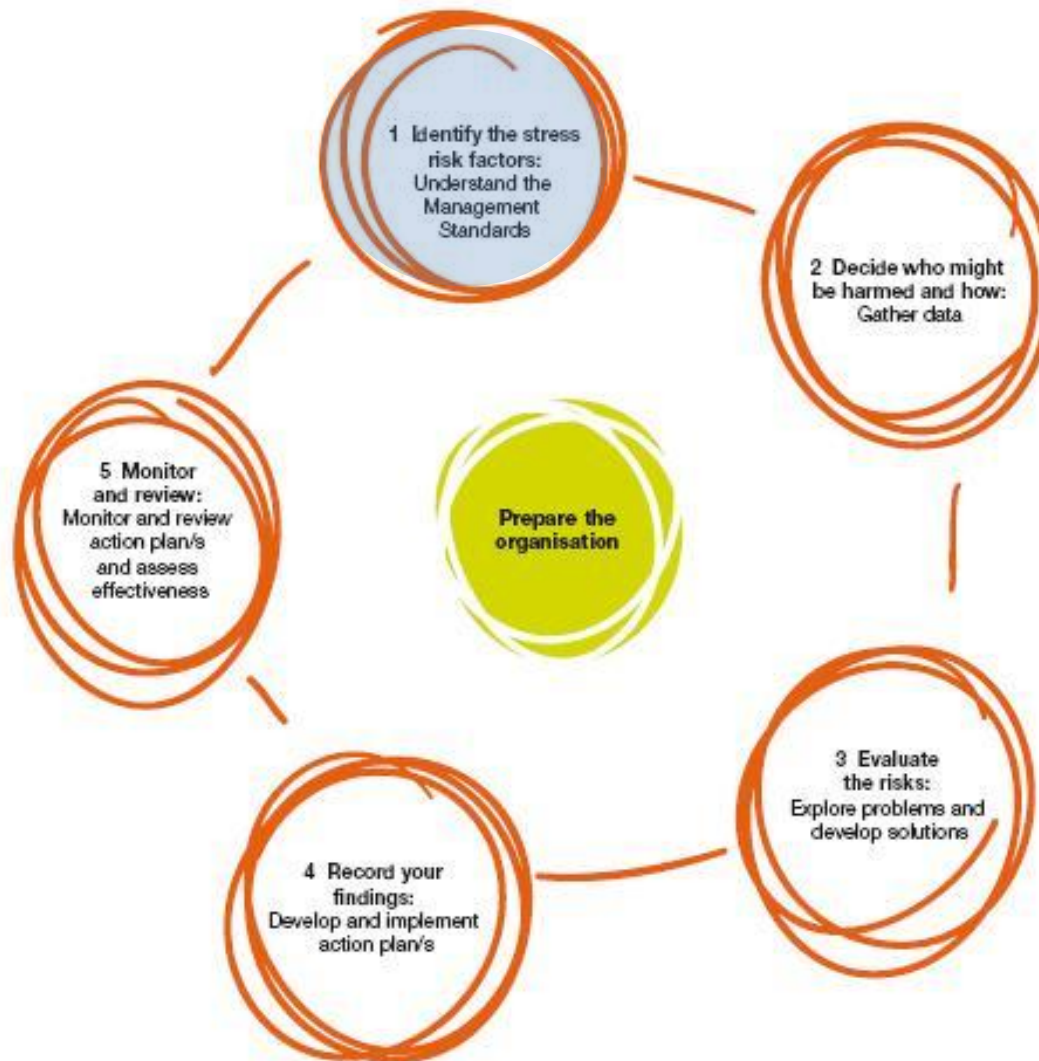
---

## Summary:

- Need senior management commitment
- Need employee involvement; partnership approach
- Project plan; include communications activities

# The Management Standards Approach

**HSG218 (2007)**



# Challenge 3: Understanding the Management Standards

---

## The six areas are:

- **Demands:** workload, work patterns, and the work environment
- **Control:** How much say the person has in the way they do their work
- **Support:** encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues
- **Relationships:** promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour
- **Role:** Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles
- **Change:** How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.

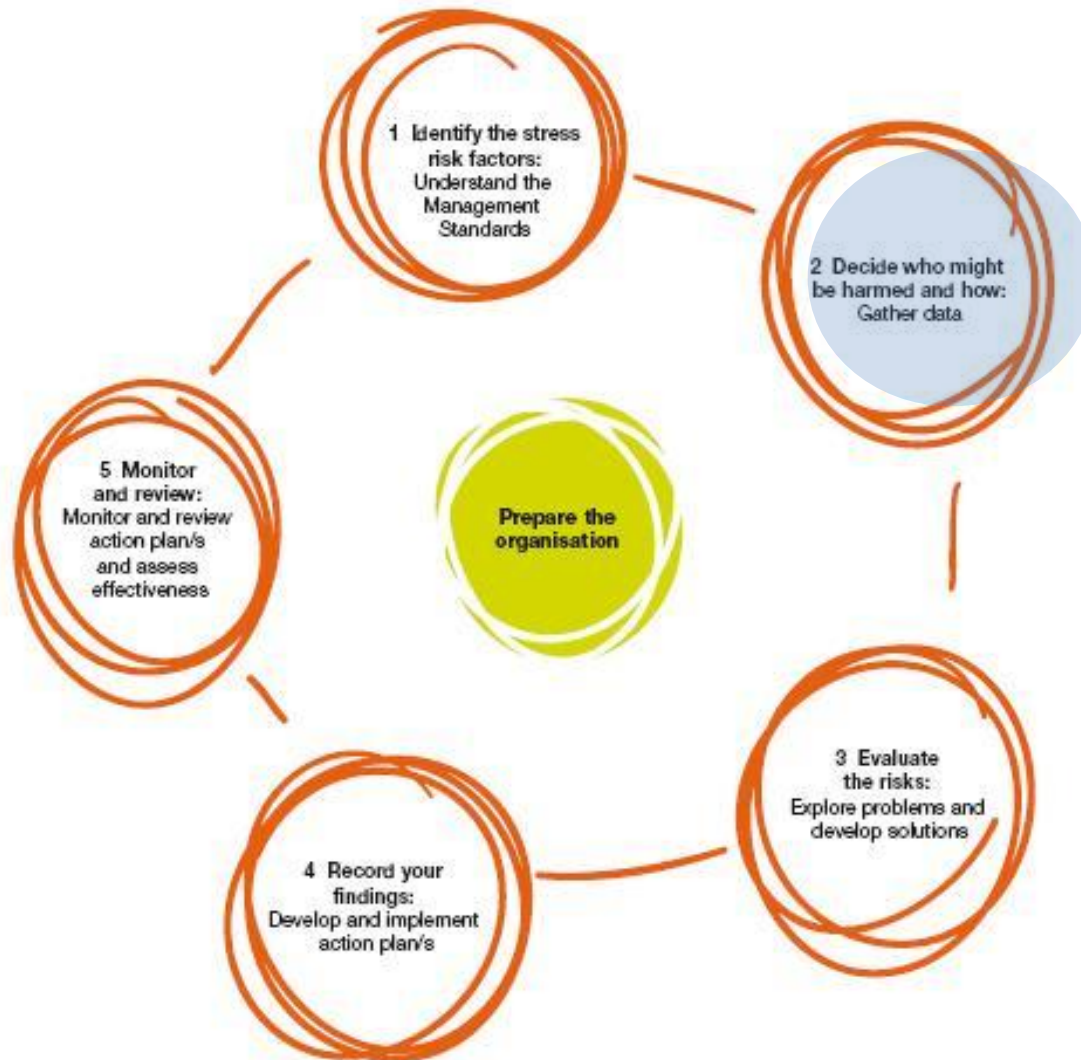


# Understanding the Management Standards

	Health	Local Govern m't	Central Govern m't	Educati on	Finance
Demand	2	2	2	1	2
Control	4	3	6	6	4
Support	3	6	=3	5	3
Role	=5	5	5	4	=5
Relations hips	=5	4	=3	3	=5
Change	1	1	1	2	1

# The Management Standards Approach

**HSG218 (2007)**



# Gathering Data

---

Data that can be used, includes:

- Sickness absence data
- Employee turnover
- Exit interview
- Productivity data
- Performance appraisals
- Informal talks with employees
- Focus groups
- Surveys
- Return to work interview

# Gathering Data

---

What are we looking for in the data?

- Areas of good performance
- Existing knowledge of problems
- Correlations between data sources
- 'Hot spots'
- Map the issues in the data to the Management Standards
- Any others?

# Gathering Data

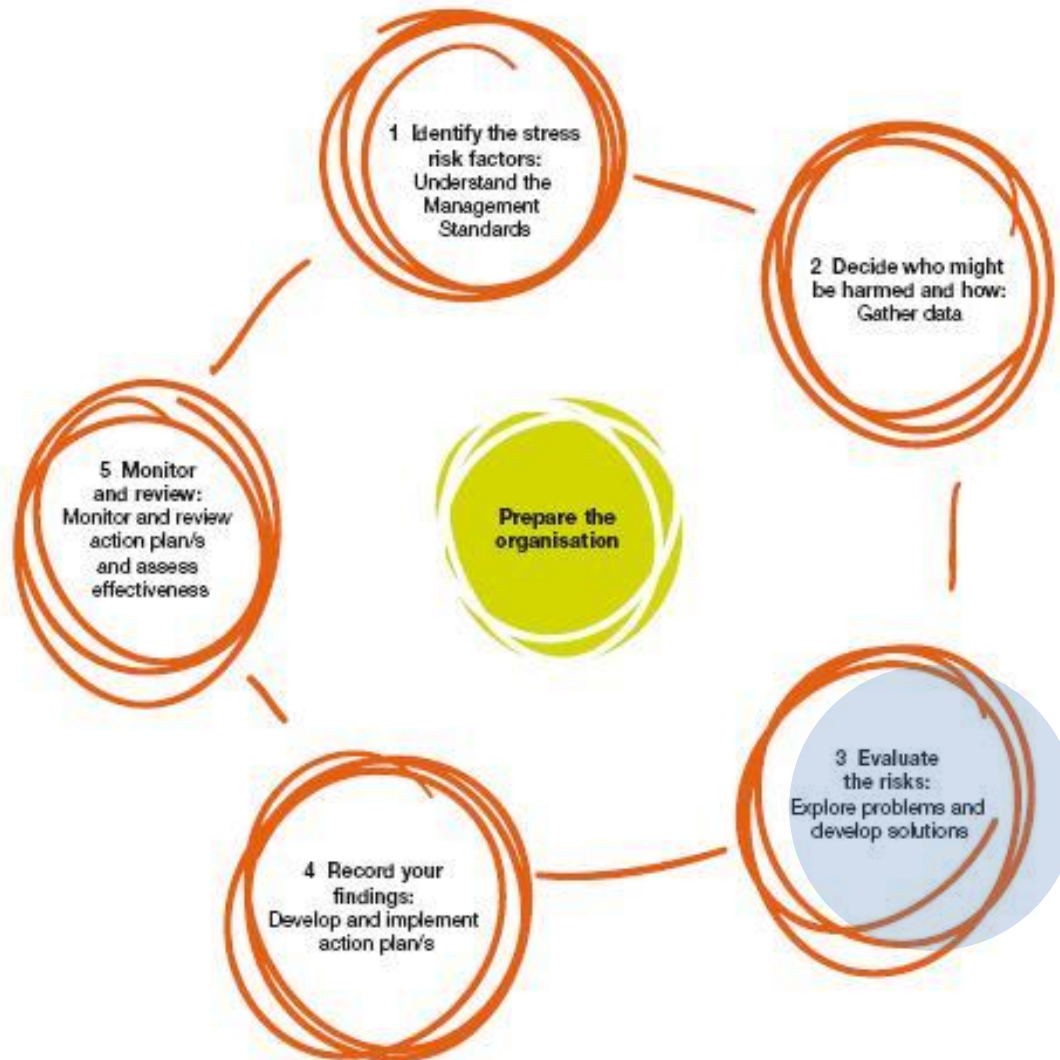
---

## Summary:

- Use all available sources of data
- Look for correlations between data
- Look for 'hot spots' to focus resources
- Look for areas of good practice
- Don't forget the Management Standards!

# The Management Standards Approach

**HSG218 (2007)**



# Challenge 4: Evaluating the risk and taking action

---

- TU consultative/ negotiating groups
- Team briefings
- Cascade briefings
- Existing working groups
- Other staff forums?
- HSE recommends the use of 'Focus Groups' as a means of engaging with staff.

# Focus Group Issues

---

- Who is going to facilitate the focus groups?
- How many focus groups are needed?
- Who should attend a focus group?
- Who will manage staff attendance?
- Who will organise locations?
- Who will be responsible for collating action plans?
- Who will communicate the agreed actions to all staff?



# The Management Standards

---

## The six areas are:

- **Demands:** workload, work patterns, and the work environment
- **Control:** How much say the person has in the way they do their work
- **Support:** encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues
- **Relationships:** promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour
- **Role:** Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles
- **Change:** How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.

# The Management Standards

---

## DEMANDS:

### The standard is that:

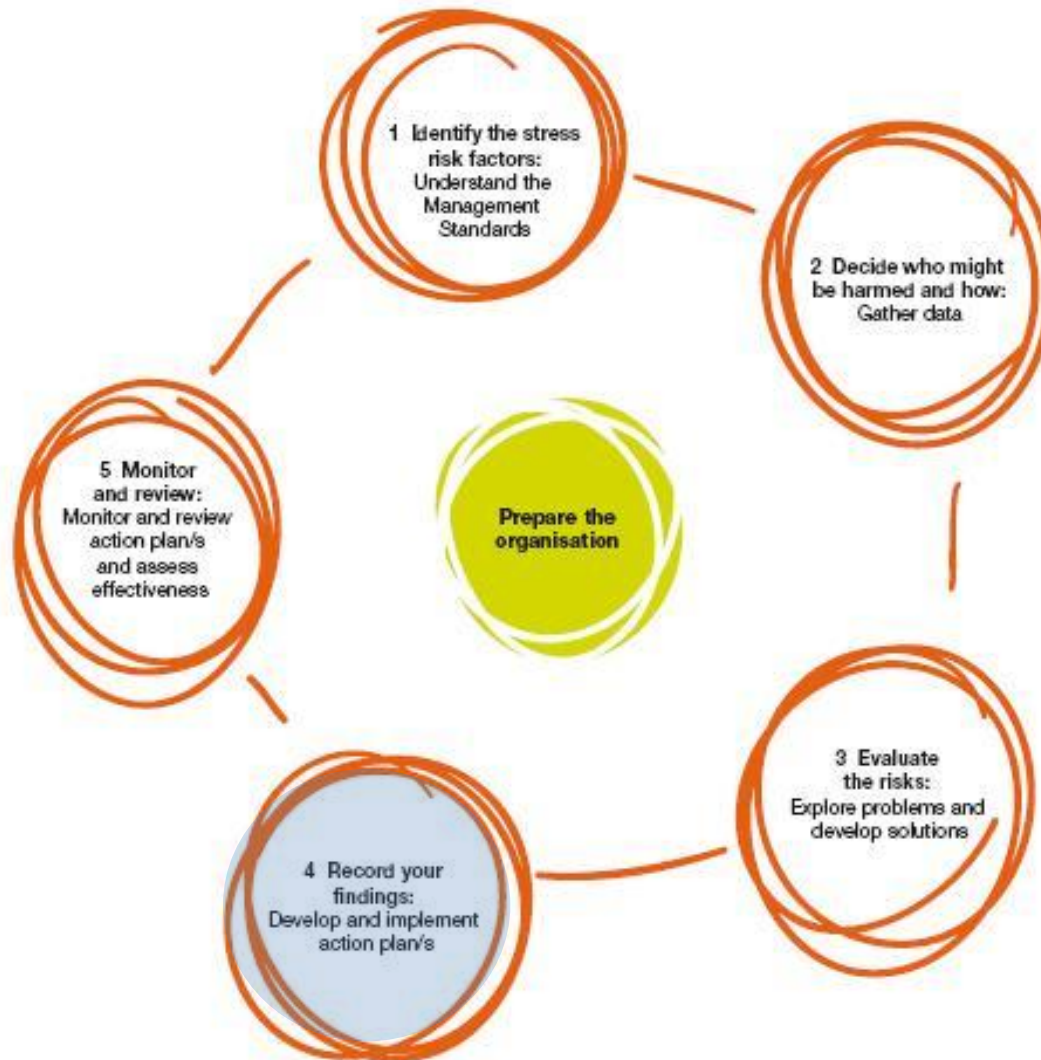
- Employees indicate that they are able to cope with the demands of their jobs; and
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

### States to be achieved are:

- The organisation provides employees with adequate and achievable demands in relation to the agreed hours of work;
- People's skills and abilities are matched to the job demands;
- Jobs are designed to be within the capabilities of employees; and
- Employees' concerns about their work environment are addressed.

# The Management Standards Approach

**HSG218 (2007)**



# What actions can be taken?

## Be S.M.A.R.T.



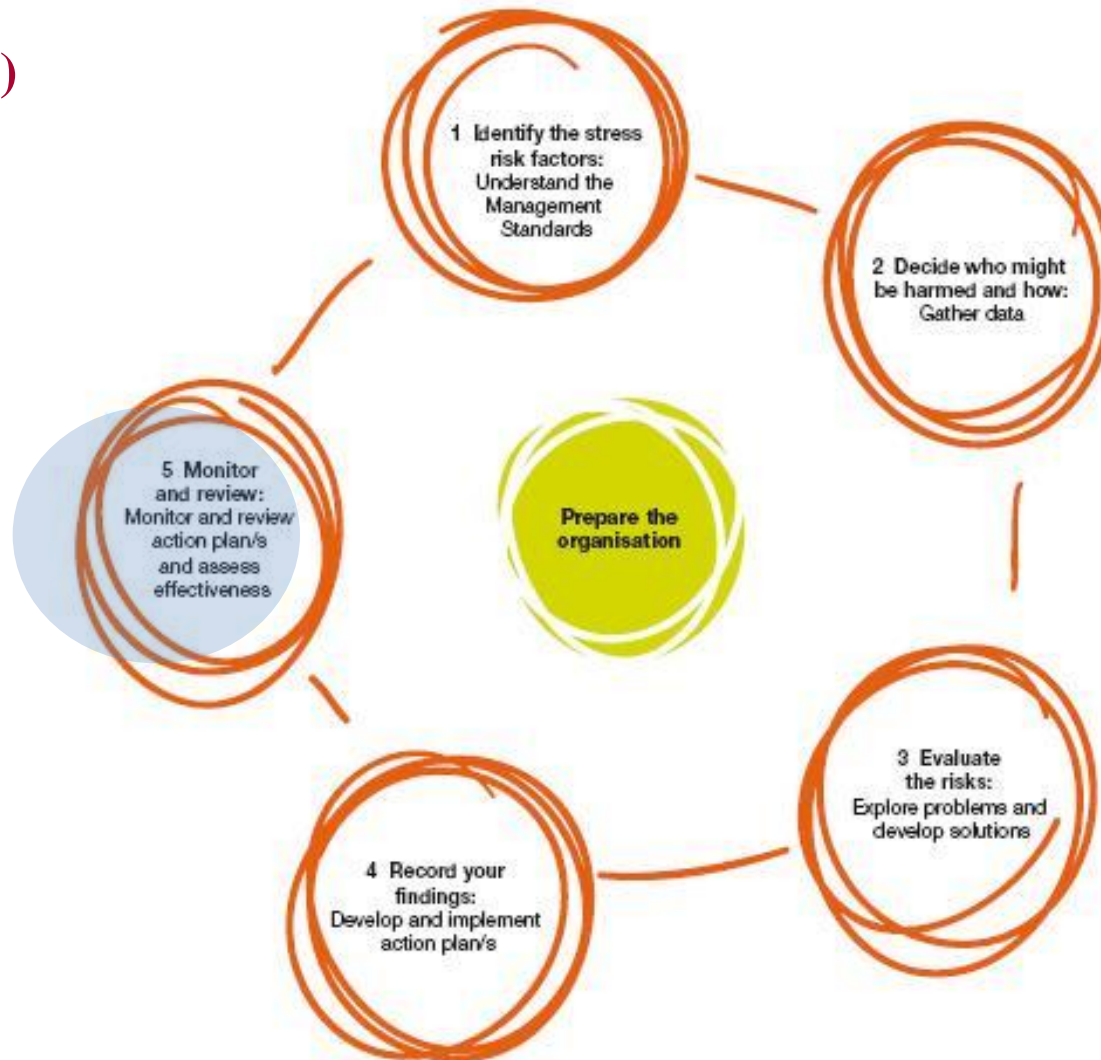
- **Specific**
- **Measurable**
- **Attainable**
- **Relevant**
- **Time bound**

# Action Planning

- The output from focus groups needs to be captured in a prioritised action plan. Things to consider:
  - Time frame, quick wins can demonstrate you are taking action, other interventions will deliver in the medium to long term
  - Level of the intervention, is it aimed at a team (micro), a department or directorate (macro) or the whole organisation (strategic)?
  - Responsibility, named individuals to take responsibility for each action and to report progress
- It is important employees are kept informed of progress at regular intervals. This activity needs to be part of your communications plan.

# The Management Standards Approach

**HSG218 (2007)**



# Challenge 5: Embedding The Approach

---

This is about making the management of stress part of everyday H&S management. How can this be achieved?

- Reviewing existing policies & procedures based on interventions
- Evaluating effectiveness of interventions on organisational performance
- Continuous improvement

# Embedding The Approach

---

Key learning points from case studies:

- Gaining senior management commitment can be challenging and time consuming
- Need to prepare senior management for possible bad news!
- Focus groups can be time consuming if not planned in advance
- Payback period on resource investment is months rather than years



# Summary

---

- Elements of the Management Standards approach can be integrated with existing initiatives
- Existing data can be used within the approach, there is no requirement to run a new staff survey
- Staff consultation is a key component of the approach
- Employer, senior and line management need to buy into the approach and the delivery of the interventions
- The Management Standards themselves need to be embedded into every day custom and practice