



# TACKLING STRESS

GUIDANCE FROM THE NATIONAL UNION OF TEACHERS

**Stress is one of the biggest problems facing teachers today. The increasingly demanding nature of our jobs has also increased pressure levels dramatically. Research shows that teachers are now facing greater day-to-day problems with occupational stress than most other employees.**

**Teachers want to feel that, at the end of the day, the special rewards of teaching are sufficient to justify coping with the pressures faced at work. This NUT guidance aims to assist you in making this possible by tackling the problem of teacher stress.**

In 1990, the NUT was the first teacher union to publish detailed guidance for its members on teacher stress. Since then, the issue has been a priority for the Union and its members, working with LEAs and the Health and Safety Executive to tackle the problem. Now, in 1999, this document sets out fully revised and updated NUT guidance for members.

This document is divided into three parts:

- it analyses the causes, symptoms and effects of stress in schools today and reaffirms the NUT's position that stress is rooted in **organisational** causes related to the way teachers are expected to work;
- it considers the reasons why employers must take action to tackle stress, including their legal obligations under health and safety law and the penalties they face if they fail to act; and
- it sets out a practical programme for NUT members in schools to promote discussion of stress, identify the problems in particular schools and take up the issue with managers and governing bodies in order to tackle stress at its roots.

The principles of this guidance are equally applicable to teachers in further education colleges and universities as to teachers in schools. Throughout the document, references to schools should be read as references to colleges as well.

The guidance in this document is not intended as a substitute for direct intervention by the NUT in cases where members are already suffering mental or physical illness attributable to stress. In such cases, the NUT advises its members immediately to contact their local NUT District Secretary, the Divisional Secretary or the NUT Regional Office in Exeter for support and assistance.

This programme for members in individual schools is one part of the NUT's ongoing campaign on removing and reducing the underlying causes of teacher stress. The second is the work which NUT divisions and associations are pursuing with LEAs and other employers with a view to ensuring that all employers also take action on stress in line with their legal obligations.

**WORKING TOGETHER AS A UNION, WE CAN HELP REDUCE THE PROBLEMS OF TEACHER STRESS.**

## **Part One**

### **STRESS - AN ORGANISATIONAL ISSUE**

#### **What is Stress?**

The Health and Safety Executive defines stress as:

"The reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed upon them. It arises when they worry they can't cope."

Stress is not itself an illness but it is a condition that can give rise to very real illness.

The TUC's surveys of safety reps have shown that stress is the main health and safety concern in four out of five schools. Government surveys have reported around 4 per cent of teachers suffering anxiety, depression or physical illness due to their work. The NUT believes that this may substantially underestimate the problem. More than half of all ill-health retirements in recent years have been for stress-related reasons, while a Bradford Council study in 1997 showed that over half of its teachers were experiencing difficulties due to stress, a far higher proportion than among other groups of its staff.

#### **How does Stress Manifest Itself?**

The effects of stress can be manifested in many different ways, including physical effects such as raised heart rate, headache, dizziness, palpitations, skin rashes, aching neck and shoulders and lowering of resistance to infection. Over a long period stress may contribute to chronic health problems such as heart disease and stomach ulcers.

Various psychological and behavioural changes affecting work performance and interpersonal relationships may also be noticed by stressed individuals' colleagues, including inability to concentrate, overworking, irritability or aggression, becoming withdrawn or unsociable, or reluctance to accept constructive criticism and advice.

Appendix 2 sets out a list of common stress symptoms. All of these stress-related problems can be eliminated if the underlying causes of stress are themselves tackled.

#### **What are its Causes?**

Research carried out for the NUT has shown that by far the most common causes of teacher stress are tasks related to teaching and, in particular, the classroom situation. Next in the stress "league table" come organisational and managerial aspects of schools, and problems relating to interaction with the community and the social environment within the school.

These are just a few of the most frequently cited causes of stress in teaching - you can probably think of more:

- Excessive working hours
- Excessive workload
- Rising class sizes
- Pressures due to OFSTED inspection
- Changes in curriculum & courses
- Changes to assessment & testing requirements
- Poor management
- Workplace bullying
- Crumbling schools
- Pupil misbehaviour
- Risk of violence from pupils, parents and intruders
- Lack of support with bureaucracy, form filling and routine tasks
- Lack of job security due to redundancy and fixed term contracts
- Lack of control over the job
- Burden of providing cover

- Threat to early retirement arrangements
- Denigration of profession by politicians & media
- Lack of public esteem

One thing which should spring out at you from this list is that, although stress is very much a health and safety issue, many of its causes are drawn from wider areas of conditions of service and school management.

The NUT's view, therefore, is that teacher stress is caused primarily by organisational factors related to the ways teaching and schools are organised. This in turn has determined the NUT's approach to tackling stress within LEAs and schools.

---

## **Part Two**

### **WHAT EMPLOYERS MUST DO**

#### **Legal Obligations to Take Action on Stress**

The major underlying sources of teacher stress are organisational in nature. Stress is rooted in the way teaching and schools are organised. The solutions, therefore, must rest with employers. Stress cannot be eliminated by individual teachers taking up hobbies or adopting "coping strategies" as is sometimes suggested.

Employers are legally required to take action on stress. They have a general legal duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of employees. They also have a specific duty under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 to undertake risk assessments which seek to identify and eliminate or reduce risks to their employees' health, safety and welfare.

**Stress falls firmly into this category of risks to health, safety and welfare.** As the employers of teachers, LEAs and governing bodies must consider the risk of stress among their workforce. They must then take steps to remove the risk or, where this is not possible, to reduce the risk by any necessary changes in working practices or by introducing appropriate protective measures.

#### **The Implications of Failure to Act**

**Stress among teachers harms schools' efficiency and the quality of education delivered to pupils.** These are not the only implications, however, of failing to take action to tackle stress. Employers who fail to take action to reduce the risk of stress injury within the workplace will also find that they are vulnerable to legal action from employees who suffer such injury.

The principal legal action will be a claim for damages for injury caused by the employer's negligence. Employers have a duty to take all reasonable care for their employee's safety and well-being. They must take reasonable steps to avoid a foreseeable risk of injury. Where an employer knows, or ought to know, that the situation at work carries a risk that a member of staff will have a breakdown, they must take action to improve the situation.

Employers may also be liable under the Disability Discrimination Act 1996 if they fail to make reasonable adjustments for employees who are suffering from a disability as defined by that Act. This could include a failure to adjust workload or working hours, to provide additional support or reallocating duties for a teacher returning to school after a period of sickness absence due to stress.

The most well-known legal case so far on stress at work is that of Walker. Mr Walker's employer had failed to take adequate action to support him on his return to work after stress-related absence despite promises to do so. The courts decided that the employer was liable for extensive damages after he suffered a further stress-related breakdown and was forced to leave his job.

The NUT recently won a major victory for one of its members, Muriel Benson, who was forced to retire on ill-health grounds after years of stress-related illness. Mrs Benson had informed her school managers of

the pressures she was facing due to excessive workload and other factors but nothing was done to support her. When she was forced into retirement, the NUT took action on her behalf against her employer, Wirral LEA, for damages for the injury she had suffered. The LEA agreed to an out-of-court settlement involving a payment of £47,000 to Mrs Benson. This is believed to be the first teacher stress case to be settled. Although it sets no legal precedent because it was settled out of court, the NUT believes that Mrs Benson's case will make it easier for claimants to demonstrate that they were at risk of foreseeable injury due to stress.

### **What should your Employer have been doing?**

There is now no excuse for employers being unaware of their legal obligations to take appropriate action on this area. Some LEAs have already produced some form of guidance for school managers and school staff. Find out from your local NUT District Secretary if such guidance exists and, if it does, obtain a copy for yourself and your colleagues.

The Health and Safety Executive's Education Services Advisory Committee (ESAC) has also issued detailed guidance on this area for employers and managers in schools. The ESAC document, "Tackling Occupational Stress", sets out practical guidance on tackling stress among employees. Find out whether your managers have been sent this guidance by your LEA. It will be a useful tool both for school managers and for employees in any discussions on stress.

Effective LEA policies on reducing stress should take a systematic approach based on the risk assessment principles set out above. Clear guidance should be given to managers on identifying signs of stress, including the kinds of symptoms set out earlier in this document, and on taking appropriate steps to deal with the causes of stress. Policies should not be limited merely to setting out sources of help such as occupational health or counselling services, valuable though these can be to some individuals. Effective policies must also look at the organisational solutions necessary to tackle the problem at its roots.

The best policies will encourage group discussion and problem-solving as advocated in this document. There should be full consultation between managers and staff, including with their union representatives.

**As employees and NUT members, it is not your responsibility to undertake the exercise of "risk assessment" on stress and deciding upon necessary measures to combat stress. This responsibility lies with your employer and should be conducted through your managers.** You can, however, contribute to the process by ensuring that a debate takes place, that problems are identified and that solutions are discussed and implemented. The next section of this document aims to assist you and your colleagues in doing precisely that.

---

## **Part Three WHAT NUT MEMBERS CAN DO**

### **Identifying the Problems through Self-Assessment**

Use the NUT checklist of possible problems at work (attached as Appendix 1) as a starting point for a group discussion of stress among your colleagues at school. This will allow you to identify the particular problems in your school which you can take forward into further discussions with your managers and governors.

The first reason for a group discussion exercise of this kind is consciousness raising. Matters are too often glossed over in staff-rooms. The Union often finds that while everyone agrees that stress in teaching is a major problem, it's difficult to persuade individuals to acknowledge publicly that they themselves are suffering from stress. Starting the debate starts the process of solving the problems - it's often said that talking about stress is a major de-stressor in itself.

The second reason for this is to gather evidence of the exact nature of the problem. Once the major problems have been identified and agreed, then you can start thinking about the next stage - the steps which could be taken to tackle these problems and improve matters for staff which you can raise with the managers and governors.

We're not putting forward a single suggested way of holding your discussion - you should choose the method you think will be most appropriate in your school. You could circulate the checklist to colleagues to complete before discussing the results at a meeting. Perhaps you might want someone to lead the discussion who has looked at everyone's completed checklists and worked out what the most common problems are. Alternatively, you could wait until the meeting and complete the checklist together then. The most important thing is to try to make sure that as many people as possible are, at some point, actually present at a discussion and making a contribution.

You can also decide for yourselves who you should involve in your meeting. You may wish to discuss the issue at first without the senior management team, since they will become involved at the second stage of the exercise, but many senior managers are NUT members as well and will want to put forward their own views at some point about the issues that cause **them** stress.

You may also wish to involve non-NUT teaching colleagues in your discussions. Not only will this ensure that your conclusions carry more weight, as they will reflect the views of all teachers, but it will also be good for recruitment purposes to show other teachers that the NUT is taking a lead on this issue!

Discussing the issue of teacher stress in this way will help you and your colleagues to focus on the major causes of stress in your school as you see them. Different schools have different problems. In one school, pupil behaviour may be the major stress factor for all or some staff. In others, it may be management style, physical conditions, bureaucratic burdens or sheer length of working hours.

Particular groups of staff may have particular concerns - for example special needs teachers or teachers in a particular site or department. While they may be in a minority overall, if the problem they identify applies to the whole group then it should not be ignored.

Although the checklist is quite lengthy, it's not intended to be exhaustive. You and your colleagues may well put forward other issues that cause you stress. You may also want to refer to the list of symptoms set out earlier in this guidance to facilitate discussion on whether and to what extent you and your colleagues are suffering from stress.

The next section gives you guidance about analysing the situation once the problems have been identified in order to identify ways of taking issues forward. **Remember, tackling problems together will help you tackle them successfully.**

## **Analysing the Causes and Identifying Solutions**

When you think you have identified the most common issues of concern, it's time to form ideas for the way forward.

It's likely that many of the problems identified from the checklist can be grouped in some broad way and traced to wider underlying issues. Doing this will point out the area or areas which you and your colleagues need to pursue to improve the position in your school. Looking behind the problems you have identified is, therefore, necessary to determine where their solutions lie.

Where the causes of stress have been identified as being rooted in management style, for example, then you will need to pursue the solutions by pursuing appropriate changes in that area. Alternatively, you may need to tackle other areas such as conditions of service or pupil behaviour issues.

Let's take some possible situations using examples from the NUT checklist. In doing this we will try to consider whether there is a common underlying cause of the problems identified and then consider what points you might put forward for action at school level to improve matters.

Of course, the concerns you identified from the checklist may not be as easily grouped as the ones in these examples and the situations may not be not as clear-cut. The overall approach set out, however, will still be relevant to you.

### **Situation 1**

What if you and your colleagues picked out the following issues in particular from the checklist?

- I have to deal with disruptive pupils
- I feel isolated in the classroom
- I am uncertain about the limits of discipline in the classroom
- I am afraid of violence from aggressive students and parents

It is fairly clear from these that pupil behaviour, be it actual or potential, is seen as a problem.

### **Situation 2**

What if you identified the following issues from the checklist?

- We are not allowed to participate in decision making in this school
- I am often in conflict with my managers
- I feel that I am discriminated against because of my race, sex, disability etc
- Unreasonable deadlines and time pressures are too often imposed on me

Here, management style is clearly the issue of concern.

### **Situation 3**

What if the following issues from the checklist were identified?

- Too many meetings are held preparing for our OFSTED inspection
- Pre-OFSTED inspections cause unnecessary pressure on us
- We are expected to rewrite all of our policies for our OFSTED inspection

OFSTED is consistently cited as one of the major causes of stress by NUT members, particularly those coming up to, or undergoing, inspection.

### **Situation 4**

Finally, what if the following issues from the checklist were the most important to you and your colleagues?

- My working hours are excessive
- The school does not acknowledge the time we spend working at home
- I have to teach too many pupils
- There are too many after school meetings
- Covering for absent colleagues disrupts my work
- I do not have enough support in dealing with bureaucratic paperwork
- I am fed up of photocopying and typing my own work

The first two of these register general concerns at the level of working time. The remaining problems indicate more specific underlying reasons for excessive working hours and excessive workload. Many of these are related to the level of resources given to the school and the way in which the school chooses to use them. Others are related to bureaucratic burdens imposed by school management.

### **Persuading Your School to Take Action on Stress**

Once you've identified something as a problem, you have a legitimate expectation that it will become an issue for discussion and resolution within the school.

As we have said earlier, your employer has a legal obligation to consider the problems of stress and seek to reduce or remove them. Where you and your colleagues have made the issue public in this way by identifying problems of common concern then it is extremely unwise for your managers and governors, responsible in turn to your employer, to refuse to address them. Muriel Benson brought her concerns to the attention of her managers and they ignored them. Most employers will want to make sure that this does not happen in future in their schools.

The NUT favours a "whole school" debate on the issue, ideally as one of the school's INSET days, which fully involves all teachers and their managers in addressing the problems and causes of stress and in

planning and implementing the strategies needed to reduce stress. The whole strategy should be seen as an exercise in problem solving at school level.

You should put forward any solutions which you have come up with for discussion and emphasise that they are the collective views of all of the teachers who took part in your discussions. The onus will then be on your managers to explain why they are not feasible and explain what they propose instead. Doing nothing should not be an option - to do this would immediately lay the employer open to potential legal penalties if a teacher suffered stress-related injury. You should try to ensure that specific agreed proposals emerge from the meeting and you should then monitor the progress in implementing them.

It might be helpful to get someone in to the school to help facilitate discussions. The LEA may be able to provide someone, especially if it has been taking the issue seriously itself and has ideas to contribute or a programme to promote. Your NUT Division or the Regional Office may also be able to offer assistance and support at such a meeting.

Registering your discussions with the NUT, including in particular the problems which you identified, would also be sensible. It may be particularly helpful if nothing is done about stress and you and your colleagues subsequently need NUT assistance collectively or individually.

The above is very much a starting point for you and your colleagues. The NUT is working, through its divisions and associations, to ensure that all employers recognise and meet their legal responsibilities. In time, we expect that systems to guard against stress will be as well-established as systems to protect against injuries in laboratories and workshops. By starting a debate in your own school, you and your colleagues will help push this process forward.

---

## **Part Four**

### **ACTION FOR INDIVIDUALS**

#### **Helping Yourself**

This guidance emphasises that fundamental changes need to be made at organisational level if stress in teaching is to be properly tackled. Individuals' attempts to solve problems for themselves cannot succeed properly if their causes are not removed.

The NUT is committed to ensuring that no teacher has to face work-related pressures with which they cannot cope. Some individuals do, however, cope better than others with the pressures of teaching and it can be helpful in some cases for teachers to look into appropriate ways of helping them cope with the problems they face. For this reason, Appendix 4 sets out a series of ideas and suggestions drawn from teachers' personal experience of dealing with their own problems. You may find this useful in considering your own situation.

Many LEAs also provide counselling services to their staff which aim to help them cope with the pressures they face at work. These can often be helpful where the teacher feels that the problem is one which they can overcome for themselves with such assistance. "Teacherline", the national 24 hour confidential counselling and advice line for teachers, has been established with NUT support for the same reason. It can be contacted free of charge on 08000 562 561.

**In serious cases, however, all NUT members should make sure that they seek the NUT's help in dealing with the problem.** The NUT has an unrivalled casework support network. Your local NUT District Secretary or the Regional Office in Exeter will assist and advise any individual member seeking support. Contact details are set out in the 'need help?' section elsewhere on the Gloucestershire Association website.

**Appendix 1**  
**TACKLING STRESS: THE NUT CHECKLIST**

Rank these from 1 to 5 :

1 Strongly agree, 2 Agree, 3 Neither agree nor disagree, 4 Disagree, 5 Strongly disagree

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I have difficulty coping with the pace of organisational change _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have to deal with disruptive pupils _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My classroom's physical working conditions are very poor _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am often in conflict with my managers _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I often struggle with uncertainty about my role and responsibility _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have worries about job insecurity _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am concerned about violence from aggressive parents _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have worries about my career development _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My working hours are excessive _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is not enough consultation in the school _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Too many meetings are held preparing for our OFSTED inspection _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My job is monotonous and boring _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The range of tasks with which I must cope creates an unacceptable workload	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I find problems of conflict with colleagues _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We are not allowed to participate in decision making in this school _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am fed up of photocopying and typing my own work _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Covering for absent colleagues often disrupts my work _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We do not receive appropriate training in this school _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not have enough support in dealing with bureaucratic paperwork	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have no control over my job _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am worried about the extent to which capability procedures are being used	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We are expected to rewrite all of our policies for our OFSTED inspection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My job is too demanding _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am uncertain about the limits of discipline in the classroom _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel isolated in the staffroom _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not feel secure against the risk of violent intruders _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The school suffers from a lack of effective leadership _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The school does not acknowledge the time we spend working at home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have to teach too many pupils _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I lack support from my managers _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I find problems with students who are unmotivated _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel that I am discriminated against because of my race/sex/disability _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There are too many after school meetings _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel it is unjust that my status in society as a teacher is so poor _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our rest facilities are shoddy and dispiriting _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unreasonable deadlines and time pressures are too often imposed on me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pre-OFSTED inspections cause unnecessary pressure on us _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My skills are under used _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is too little flexibility in our working arrangements _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel isolated in the classroom _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have difficulties balancing the commitments of work and home _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I find the noise of the classroom difficult to bear _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I find difficulty in coping with changes to curricular requirements _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My work objectives are not always clear to me _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not receive a proper break from work during the school day _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## **Appendix 2**

### **SPOTTING STRESS : CHECKLIST OF SYMPTOMS**

#### **Physical Symptoms**

- Headaches and migraines
- Sweating
- Palpitations
- Lethargy
- General aches & pains
- Muscular tension
- Colds and other respiratory infections
- Asthmatic attacks
- Raised cholesterol level
- Ulcers
- Digestive tract disorders
- Increased blood pressure
- Thyroid disorders
- Diabetes
- Menstrual disorders
- Possible effects on pregnancy
- Heart disease
- Increased risk of cancer

#### **Mental Health Symptoms**

- Irritability
- Depression
- Increased risk of suicide
- Withdrawal
- Anxiety
- Tearfulness
- Poor concentration
- Forgetfulness
- Disturbed sleep and insomnia
- Low self-esteem
- Burn-out\_
- Post traumatic stress disorder

#### **Behavioural Symptoms**

- Heavy drinking
- Misuse of drugs
- Smoking
- Eating disorder
- Poor timekeeping
- Increased sickness absence
- Increased accident rate
- Deterioration in personal relationships

## **Appendix 3**

### **THE NUT "ACTION PLAN FOR SCHOOLS"**

The NUT/Nottingham University "Action Plan for Schools" was drawn up in 1990 by Nottingham University stress specialists as part of a pioneering stress research project carried out for the NUT. It sets out the basis for a school-based stress management programme which emphasises that the major cause of teacher stress is the way teaching is organised and that this area must be tackled in order to tackle the problem of stress itself.

The NUT/Nottingham University "Action Plan for Schools" looks at:

- Delivering education: the "task environment" facing teachers in the school as they address the job of delivering education to the pupils.
- Problem-solving: the extent to which the school works together as a team when dealing with the problems that it faces.
- Development: the way in which professional and personal development are approached in the school.

#### **Delivering Education : the "Task Environment"**

- Design jobs and allocate duties such that teachers' skills are better matched to the demands on them.
- Reduce time pressures and introduce time management training.
- Provide more non-contact time for preparation and marking.
- Make greater use of teaching and administrative assistants.
- Improve physical environment and provide more teaching resources.
- Reduce class size.
- Provide better training on the management of disruptive pupils and more support in dealing with them.
- Work towards increased agreement on "aims and objectives" of the school.

#### **The Problem-solving Environment**

- Develop a more co-operative and supportive culture.
- Provide time and opportunities for staff to relax together.
- Improve cohesiveness and quality of social environment.
- Develop the idea of team problem-solving.
- Legitimise this by providing time for staff to discuss problems together.
- Improve communication within the school.
- Provide better feedback to teachers.
- Request senior teachers to share information more readily.

#### **The Development Environment**

- Develop better person-management within schools.
- Improve leadership and management styles adopted by headteachers/deputies.
- Make more frequent and better use of expressions of appreciation of teachers' efforts and achievements.
- Work towards more frequent and better use of feedback.
- Improve initial and in-service training for teachers, making it relevant to their real needs.
- Include management training for headteachers, stress and time management, training in communication skills and in the management of disruptive pupils.
- Seek to provide better support facilities for staff within schools, including a broadly-based occupational health service, counselling and leisure facilities.
- Make efforts to improve community and public perceptions of the school and its teachers and pupils.

## **Appendix 4**

### **THE NUT "ACTION PLAN FOR INDIVIDUALS"**

The following "NUT Action Plan for Individuals" comprises ideas which many other teachers have successfully adopted to help them cope with problems.

#### **Take a rational approach to teaching:**

- try to be consistent and open with pupils;
- keep pupils fully occupied;
- positively reward pupils for good aspects of their behaviour;
- be well organised and plan events in advance;
- establish a sensible teaching routine;
- think objectively and unemotionally about problems;
- focus on the good things associated with teaching.

#### **Use the support of colleagues:**

- talk problems over with colleagues;
- seek advice from more experienced teachers;
- take difficult problems to the head;
- obtain reassurance from colleagues that they feel the same way about their problems;
- express feelings to colleagues.

#### **Put teaching in perspective:**

- stand back from situations and think rationally about them;
- have a long-term plan and then evaluate things against this plan;
- try to become less emotionally involved with problems;
- consciously force themselves to slow down;
- do not cope by just working harder and harder;
- forget work when finished for the day;
- become more involved in out-of-work activities and with people outside teaching.