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**Health, Safety and well  
being challenges for  
local government and  
possible responses**

**CIEH South East  
Regional Forum  
High Wycombe  
2<sup>nd</sup> December 2009**

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**Steve Sumner  
National Health  
and Safety Policy  
Adviser**

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**pay, pensions  
and  
employment  
solutions**



## **The next 30 minutes or so**

- A bit about LGE
- Drivers for improvement
- Sickness absence challenges
- How to improve attendance without managing sickness absence!
- Well-being interventions
- Examples of good practice

## Local Government Employers (LGE)

- Created April 2006 out of Employers Organisation
- Part of LGA group
  - LGE
  - 4ps
  - LACoRS
  - IdeA
  - Leadership Centre for local Government
- Slimmed down and focused
- Around 50 employees
- Based LG House, Smith Square, Westminster
- Pay, Pensions and Employment Solutions (includes H&S)
- [www.lge.gov.uk](http://www.lge.gov.uk)



*Local Government Association*

The Local Government Association is the national voice for more than 400 local authorities in England and Wales. The LGA group comprises the LGA and five partner organisations which work together to support, promote and improve local government.





## **Local government in context: Number and types of local authority (as of today)**

- All separate employers
- England
  - 27 County Councils
  - 201 District Councils
  - 33 London Boroughs
  - 36 Metropolitan Districts
  - 78 Unitary Councils
- Wales
  - 22 unitary councils
- Scotland
  - 32 unitary councils

## **Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)**

- New county unitary councils
  - Cornwall
  - Northumberland
  - Durham
  - Shropshire
  - Wiltshire
- Two unitary councils
  - Cheshire
  - Bedfordshire

**Local government in context; Workforce issues; LA demographic report 2009** [www.lga.gov.uk/lga/aio/3759103](http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/aio/3759103)

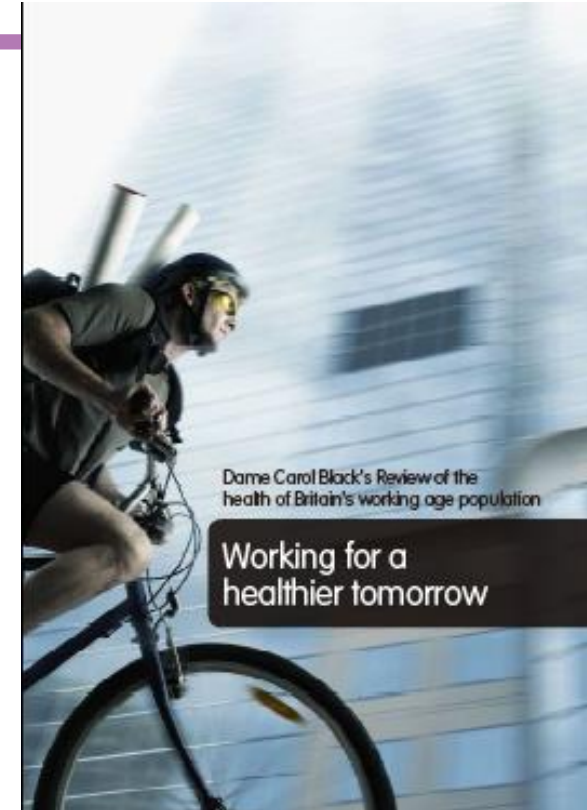
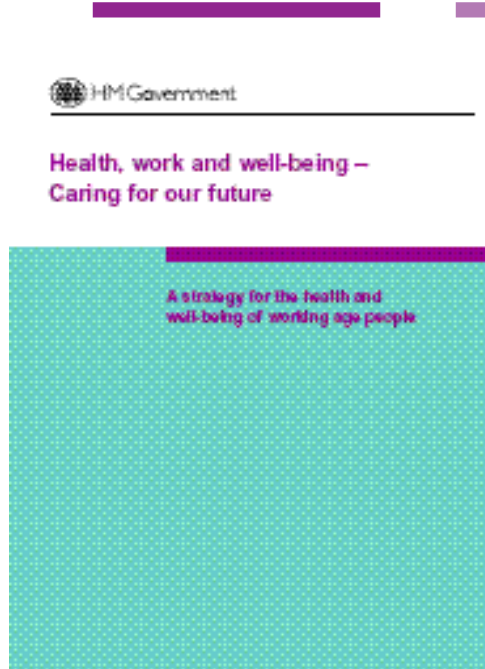
- Reduced number of districts due to LGR creating larger organisations
- Period of significant change, potential for issues
- Range from a few 100s (smallest district) to many 1000s
  - Smallest district 177 employees
  - Large city unitary 55K employees
- A round 2.271 million employees
- Equivalent to 1.582 million FTEs
- Part time work prevalent (52.8%)
- Predominantly female (75.1%)
- Workforce older average age
- Getting older

## **Local government in context; Workforce issues**

- 33.6% of the work force over 50
- Retention of skills and knowledge an issue
- Recruitment issues (5.8% under 25)
- Sickness absence remains a challenge
- Cross boundary appointments
- Greater use of contractors in delivering services
- Partnerships with private, public, third and fourth sector organisations
- Getting more from the same (probably less)

# Report of the Black review

[www.workingforhealth.gov.uk/documents/working-for-a-healthier-tomorrow-tagged.pdf](http://www.workingforhealth.gov.uk/documents/working-for-a-healthier-tomorrow-tagged.pdf)



## Government's response

[www.workingforhealth.gov.uk/documents/improving-health-and-work-changing-lives.pdf](http://www.workingforhealth.gov.uk/documents/improving-health-and-work-changing-lives.pdf)

## Public sector leading by example

## **Key themes of the European strategy 2007-12**

- By 2012, 25% reduction in accident incident rate per 100,000 workers in EU27
- Secure better compliance with EU legislation (SMEs)
- Simplification of legal frame work
- Promote development and implementation of national strategies
- Change employee behaviour and encourage employers to adopt health-focused approaches
- Finalise methods for identifying and evaluating new potential risks
- Improve progress tracking
- Promote H&S internationally

## The health and Safety of Great Britain/ Be part of the solution June 2009

- Everyone has a role
- Public sector as exemplars
- LGA group signed up to the pledge
- **Key goal**
  - creating safer healthier workplaces
- Local authorities may wish to sign up
- The start not the end

[www.hse.gov.uk/strategy/pledge.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/strategy/pledge.htm)



The Health and Safety of Great Britain \ Be part of the solution





## **LGA group response to the Strategy**

- Working better across LGA group
- Greater engagement and higher profile
- Working more closely with HSE on delivery
- Revitalise LA forum
- Improved governance to cover duty holder as well as regulator issues

## LGA group response to the Strategy

- WISH Forum, charter and strategy
  - Accident reduction target
  - Develop metrics for ill health recording
  - Improve H&S management
  - Improve H&S culture
- Main streaming health and safety into the procurement process
- Officer and member development
- Leadership on H&S
- Promote elected member responsibilities

**Think about  
health and  
safety**

What elected members of local  
authorities need to know





## **Individual LA response**

- Check local H&S priorities and put in place interventions
- Promote leadership on health and safety
- Effectively train your people on health and safety
- Revitalise Union engagement
- Help those who provide you with goods and services (procurement)

## Headlines to be avoided!

# COUNCIL SICK DAYS INQUIRY

Calls for private firm to check up on staff

TOWN Hall staff are off sick 10 days a year on average, new figures have revealed.

The sick days taken by workers for Bolton Council — the town's biggest employer — is costing tax payers nearly £10million a year.

And today the leader of Bolton Council, Cllr Barbara Ronson, said it was not good enough.

Now an investigation into sickness rates is expected to be held. Some councillors today called for a private firm to be brought in to monitor the staff.

Representatives of the firm would contact council employees during their sickness to check up on their illness and offer medical advice.

by Gareth Tidman

Organisations that carry out the service claim they can reduce sickness rates by around 30 per cent.

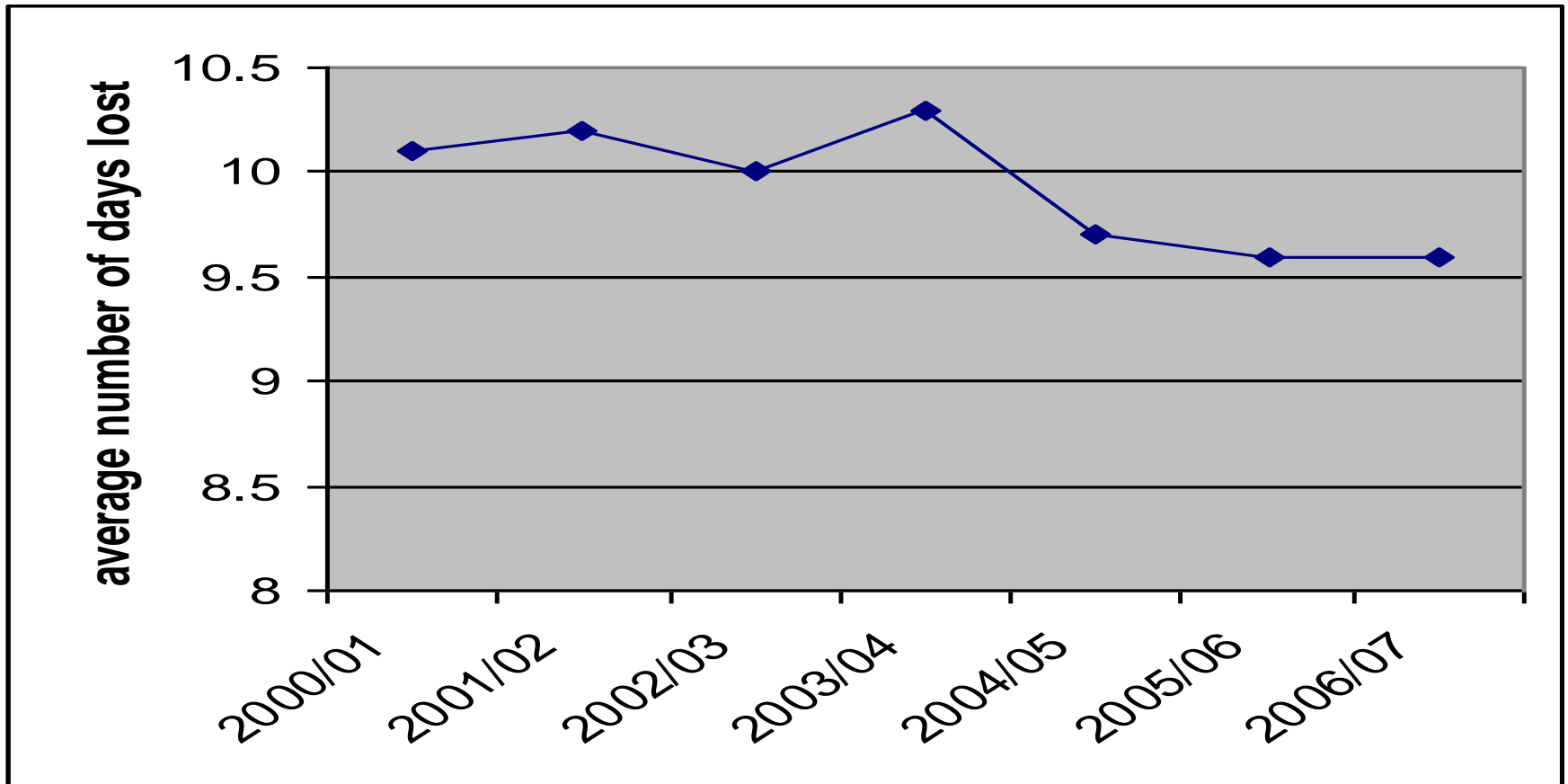
All three of Bolton's political parties have condemned the sickness rates which show that almost a quarter of a million days are being lost every year.

The council pays almost £10 million a year — equivalent to a three per cent rise on council tax bills — to staff who are not working as a result of being ill.

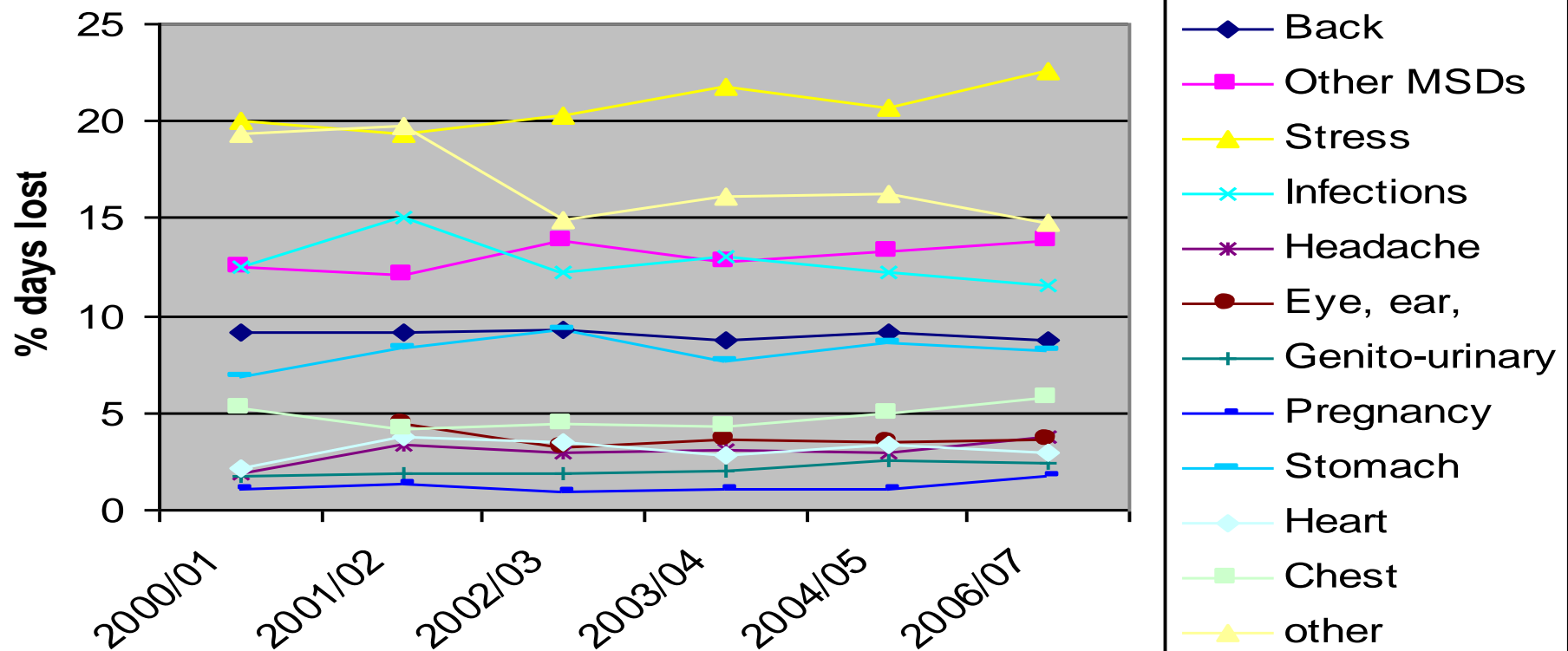
Tory Cllr Andy Morgan is urging council leaders to consider introducing a private

Turn to Page 2

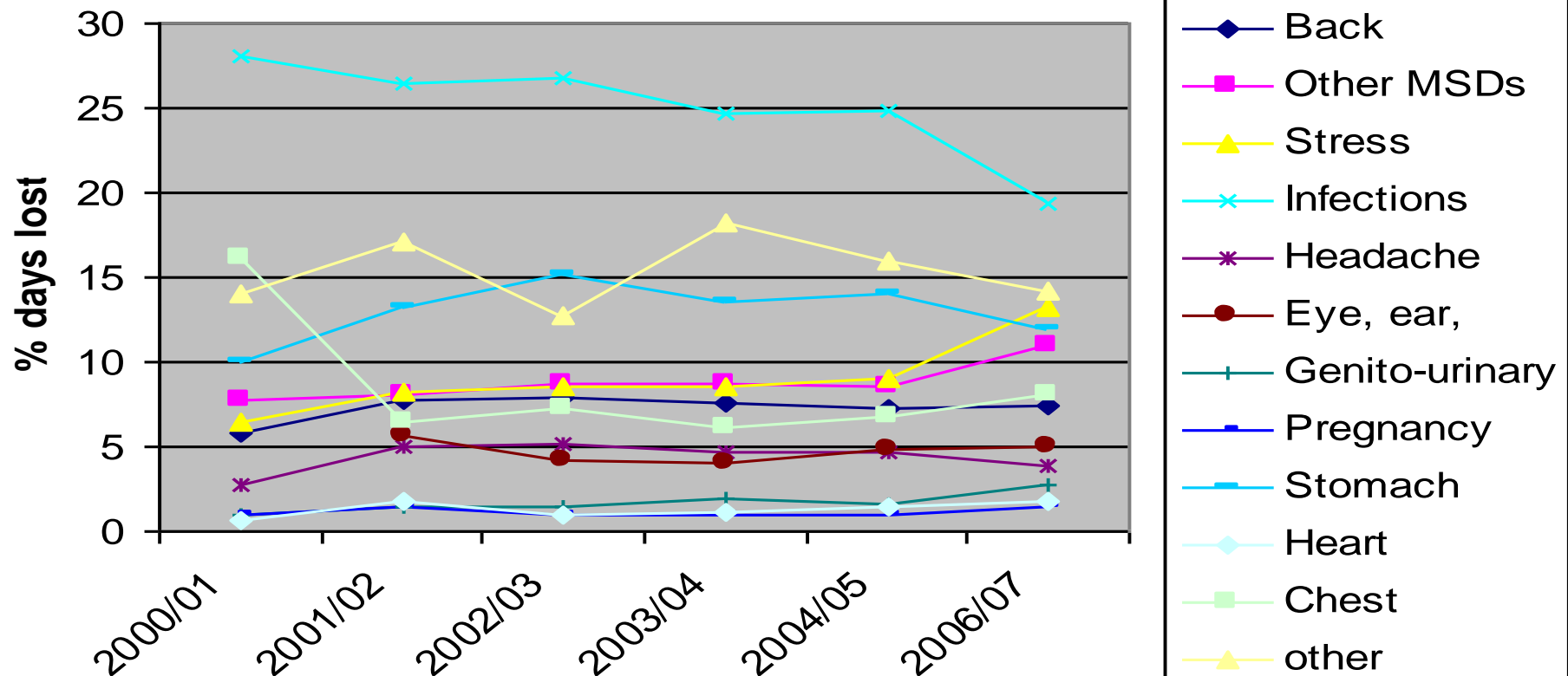
## BVPI 12 trend data



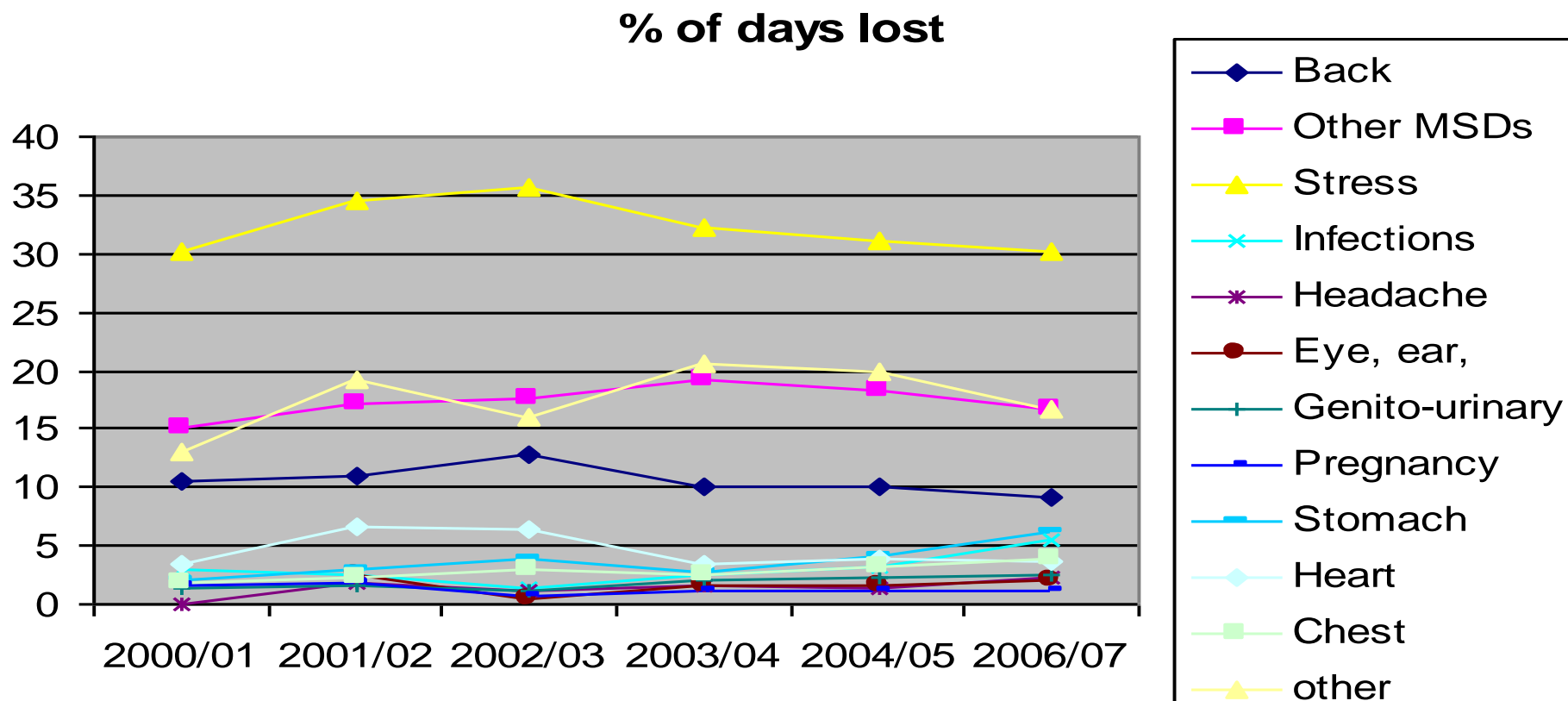
## All sickness absence by cause (EO data)



## Short term sickness absence by cause (EO data)



## Long term (20 days or more) sickness absence by cause (EO data)

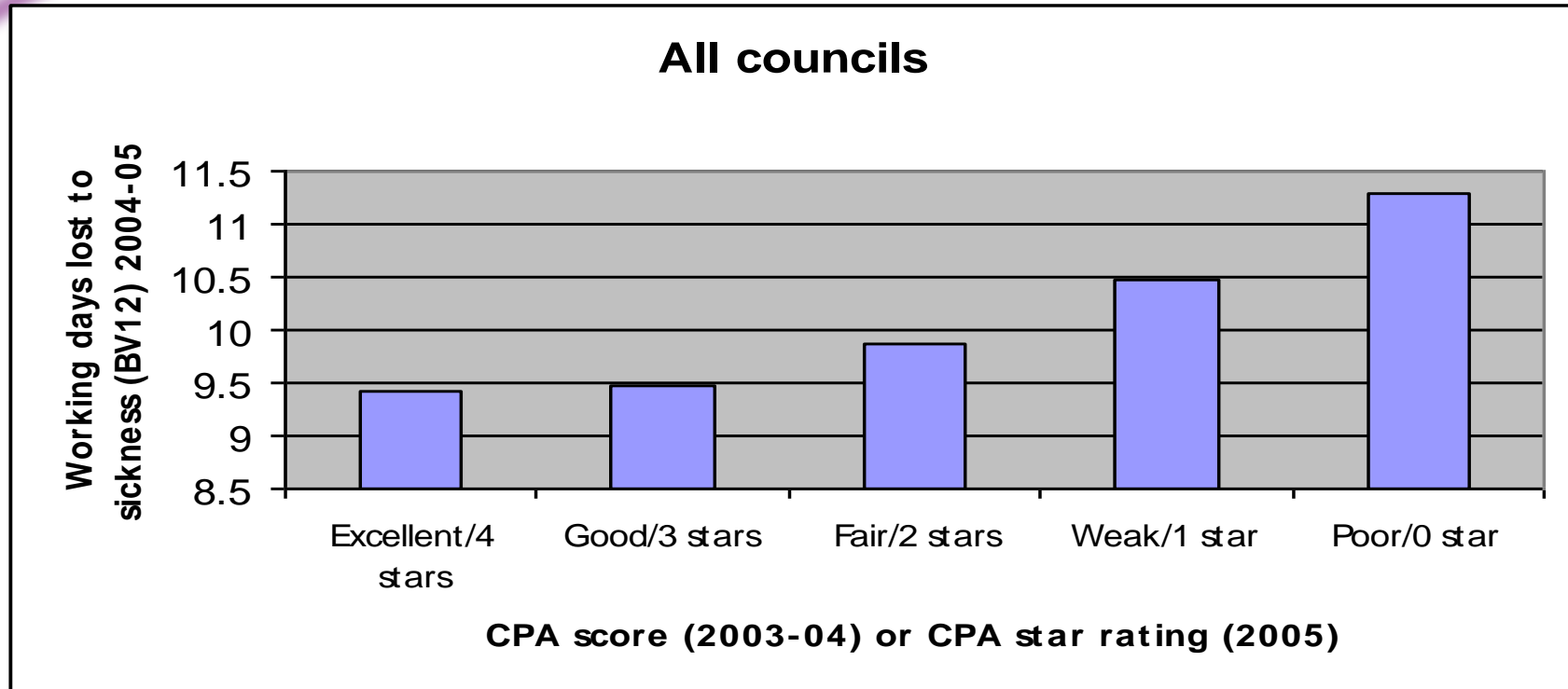


## **Estimated cost of sickness absence to local authorities**

- Estimated cost of all ill health absence 2004/05 £815 million (clearly now a lot more!)
- Estimated cost of ill health absences likely to have an occupational component (stress, MSDs and back problems >40% of all absences) £342 million
- Based purely on average salary costs, does not include teachers or school based staff\*

\*Data on teachers collected by DCSF

## All councils sickness absence rates and CPA score



## Reasons for absence (IES study, 1998)

<p><b>Health &amp; lifestyle factors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>genuine illness/poor health</li> <li>smoking</li> <li>excessive use of alcohol</li> <li>lack of exercise</li> <li>body weight</li> </ul>	<p><b>Workplace factors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>working patterns</li> <li>health &amp; safety concerns</li> <li>travel times</li> <li>excessive hours</li> </ul>
<p><b>Attitudinal &amp; stress factors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>job satisfaction</li> <li>career satisfaction</li> <li>intention to leave</li> <li>organisational commitment</li> <li>stress</li> <li>absence 'culture'</li> </ul>	<p><b>Domestic &amp; kinship factors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>gender</li> <li>no. of children under 16</li> <li>lack of flexible working arrangements</li> </ul>

## Features of a well managed organisation

[www.hse.gov.uk/services/wellmanaged.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/wellmanaged.htm)

- Leadership and commitment from the top
- Well defined mission and strategy
- Effective line management
- Effective performance management
- Good job design (allow control)
- Good work is generally good for you
- High quality jobs (good work is good for you!)
- Accurate job descriptions and person specifications
- Recruit the right people

MINISTERIAL TASK FORCE  
ON HEALTH, SAFETY AND PRODUCTIVITY  
THE WELL MANAGED ORGANISATION  
GUIDELINES FOR BOARDS

SEPTEMBER 2008

## Features of a well managed organisation

- Develop the work force and value staff
- Flexibility
- Communicate openly and to all
- Manage change effectively
- Fair remuneration
- Supportive work environment
- Rehabilitate and re-deploy
- Promote health and well being
- Improve management and organisational culture and sickness will reduce

MINISTERIAL TASK FORCE  
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SEPTEMBER 2006



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## What is well-being?

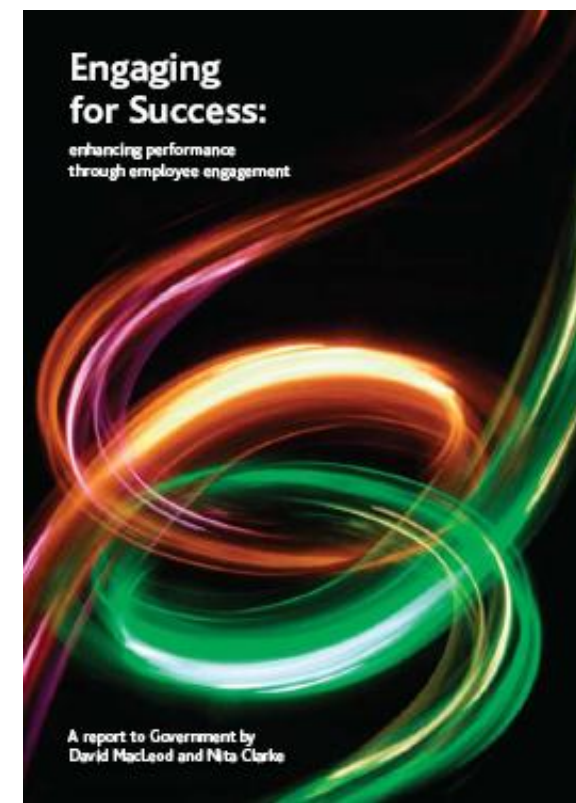
**Oxford English dictionary defines well-being as the state of being comfortable, healthy or happy (not both!)**

**The quotation (you have to have a quotation)**

**Life's not just being alive, but being well.  
Martial ad c40-c104: *Epigrammata***

**Macleod review of staff engagement**  
**[www.berr.gov.uk/files/file52215.pdf](http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file52215.pdf)**

- Well-being crucial to staff engagement
- Engagement can be measured
- Engagement correlates to improved
  - Performance
  - Innovation



## **Well-being interventions; why?**

- Improve the health outcomes of older staff
- Enable people to stay fit to enjoy longer active life (work longer)
- Reduce the flow into benefits system
- Prevent chronic future illness by making healthy choices when young
- Makes economic sense to invest in employee well-being
- Improving employee health brings positive benefits for employees and employers alike
- Staff more likely to engage with the organisations aims
- Demonstrates care for staff

## **Well-being interventions; why?**

- More than just giving information
- Actively promoting and supporting staff in making healthy life style choices
- Not just about Indian head massage! (Though it has its place)
- Using the workplace as a setting for encouraging changes in attitudes and behaviour
- Gearing effect
- Recruit from the local community
- Messages back to the family
- Healthy community

## Well-being in a recession

[www.employment-studies.co.uk/pdflibrary/op17.pdf](http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/pdflibrary/op17.pdf)

- IES snapshot study May 2009
- Small group of employers from public, private, voluntary and education sectors
- 100% of respondents said WS equally c more important in a recession
- Top priority identified-taking action to reduce sickness absence



### Is well-being still important at work?

Employers' views on recession, the new fit note and priorities for the year ahead

Claire Tyers and Rose Martin

#### Is well-being still a business priority?

While the economy was booming, so was a huge industry based around helping employers to promote health and well-being at work. Employees signed up wholesale to initiatives designed to provide healthy workplaces, good jobs and flexible working.

The business climate has clearly changed. In tough times, will employers feel this is one issue too many to worry about? Will all the messages about improving productivity and absence rates through promoting workers well-being be lost? Do managers have too much on their plate just keeping their business alive to worry about how employees are feeling?

IES conducted a 'snapshot' survey of 50 workshop participants to find out

As part of our programme of training and events, IES consultants and researchers came into contact with a wide range of employers.

When IES staff spoke at a series of 'managing well-being at work' workshops run in conjunction with the Beveridge last item, we took the opportunity to gain a 'snapshot' view of employers' current thinking on well-being. The workshops were held across England and Wales in May 2009, and we received responses from 50 employers (20 from the private sector, 10 from the public sector, 10 from the third sector, and 10 higher or further education providers).

#### We were particularly interested in:

- whether the recession had pushed health and well-being issues up or down the agenda
- whether employers were positive or unsure about the proposed move from a 'sick' to a 'fit' note
- employer priorities for the year ahead regarding staff health and well-being.

This small survey provides a snapshot of employer views on well-being. It is not intended to be representative, but gives an indication of current employer thinking.

#### Managing well-being is equally or more important in a recession


We asked employers 'Has managing employee well-being become more or less important to you in the context of the recession?' 42 employers gave us a view.

- 27 said yes, it had become more (or much more) important
- 15 stated that things hadn't changed because of the recession, or that well-being had maintained its high priority.

No employers stated that employee well-being had become less important.

## Business health check (being revised)

- Devised by Health Work and Well-being in association with Pricewaterhouse Coopers and Business in the Community
- Assessing cost of ill health and estimating impact of well-being initiatives on these costs
- Sign up and download for free at
  - [www.workingforhealth.gov.uk/Employers/Tool/](http://www.workingforhealth.gov.uk/Employers/Tool/)



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the 'Working for health' website. The browser's address bar is empty, and the page features a navigation menu with the following links: Home, About us, News and updates, Carol Black's review, Case studies, Resources, Awards, and Employers. The 'Employers' link is highlighted. Below the navigation menu, there is a search bar with the text 'Working for health' and a 'Search' button. The page also includes a logo for 'HEALTH WORK WELLBEING' and a section titled 'The Business HealthCheck'.



## **Well-being interventions; what?**

- Life style issues
  - Smoking cessation
  - Alcohol and drug support
  - Healthy staff restaurant options
  - Advice on healthy eating
- Encouraging increased physical activity
  - Exercise classes
  - Walking/pedometer initiatives
  - In house gymnasium
  - Subsidised gym membership/discounted leisure centre entry

## **Well-being interventions; what? (2)**

- Health related
  - Health screening
  - Fast track physiotherapy
  - On site massage and other therapies
  - Hydration promotion
  - Personalised healthy living programmes
  - Employee Assistance Programmes
  - Counselling service
- Financial
  - Dental insurance
  - Health insurance
  - Critical illness insurance
  - Personal accident insurance
  - Debt support

**LGE sickness absence survey 2006-07 (2008-09 out soon)**  
**Of 143 respondents 126 (88%) had a well-being programme Top five interventions**

<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Access to counselling service	85%
Smoking cessation support	74%
Subsidised gym membership/discounted access to leisure centres	58%
Health screening	54%
Walking/pedometer initiatives	43%

## **Good practice case study; Gateshead Council**

- High sickness absence
- Key challenge 10,000 employees in 400 locations
- Consultation with senior managers, elected members and employees
- Staff health survey 2002
- Identified four key issues stress, smoking, diet and physical activity
- Stress
  - Awareness training managers and staff
  - Guidance materials
  - Counselling service
- Smoking
  - Ban in council buildings and vehicles 2004
  - Smoking cessation assistance

## **Good practice case study; Gateshead Council**

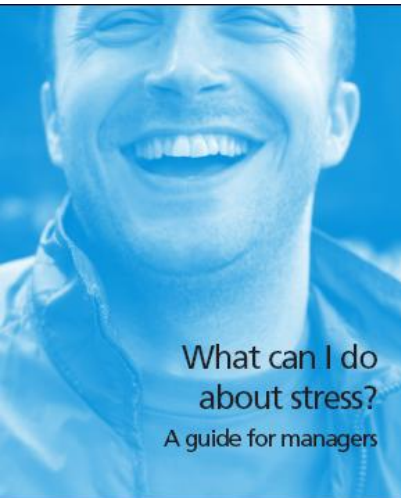
- Diet
  - 5 a day licence
  - Increased healthier food options
  - Chilled water provision
  - Weekly weigh in and dietary advice sessions
  - Weekly sale of fresh locally produced fruit and vegetables
  - NVQ Level II in Nutrition distance learning course
- Physical activity
  - Health walks
  - Lunchtime walk maps
  - Early morning, lunchtime and evening activity sessions including yoga, bums and tums, abs blast, light circuit and flexitone
  - Increased shower provision
  - NVQ Level I in Exercise Studies distance learning course

## **Good practice case study; Gateshead Council**

- Involvement and promotion campaign
  - European Weeks
  - Men's Health
  - Heart Health Week
  - Wellbeing Week
  - Back Care Week
  - Fruity Friday
  - Pedometer sales and challenges
  - Think Fit Challenge
  - No Smoking Day
  - Oral Cancer Project
  - Cycle Week
  - Walk at Work Day

## Good practice case study; Gateshead Council

- Health and well-being work underpinned by varied communication methods including
  - Developed brand “Health Matters”
  - Dedicated health matters page in employee newsletter
  - Branded items e.g. stress balls and water bottles
  - HM in employee and managers handbooks
  - Global e mails, team briefings, intranet page



## **Good practice case study; Gateshead Council**

- Outcome
  - Sickness absence reduced from 15.4 to 11.7 days average
  - Positive change in attitude to health
  - Managers feel the initiative has added value
  - Improved awareness of health issues
  - Role model in the community
  - Employer of choice
  - Six years on still high on the agenda
- Further information from Julie Wilson tel 0191 4332215
- E mail [JulieWilson@Gateshead.Gov.Uk](mailto:JulieWilson@Gateshead.Gov.Uk)



## **Good practice case study; Cumbria County Council**

- Well being for life
- Launched May 2008, with initial funding for 12-18 months
- Idea came from stress focus group
- Bring to attention of staff available services
- Themes
  - Your health
  - Your safety
  - Your money
  - Your mind
  - Your time



## **Good practice case study; Cumbria County Council**

- Three road shows visiting sites around the county, two more planned
  - Mini health checks
  - Massage
  - Advice on increasing activity
  - Healthy eating
  - Back care
  - Stress plus lots more
- Feet for life campaign and pedometer challenge
- Supported by Intranet pages
- Further information from Sharon McCubbin tel 01228 226345
- E mail [sharon.mccubbin@cumbriacc.gov.uk](mailto:sharon.mccubbin@cumbriacc.gov.uk)



- Stress home
- ⊕ Work-related stress
- ⊕ Are you a...?
- Dealing with my stress

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- ⊕ Management Standards

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- ⊕ Resources

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- Useful links

## Work-related stress - together we can tackle it

Stress at work is a [big problem](#), but together we can successfully manage and prevent it. HSE can help you prevent work-related stress and comply with the law.

- [What is work related stress?](#)
- How can I start [dealing with my stress?](#)
- How can my organisation tackle work related stress – [Management Standards](#)



### Are you a...

These roles are key to the success of [Management Standards](#) in preventing stress.

- ▶ **Board Director/CEO**
- ▶ **HR manager**

### Focus on



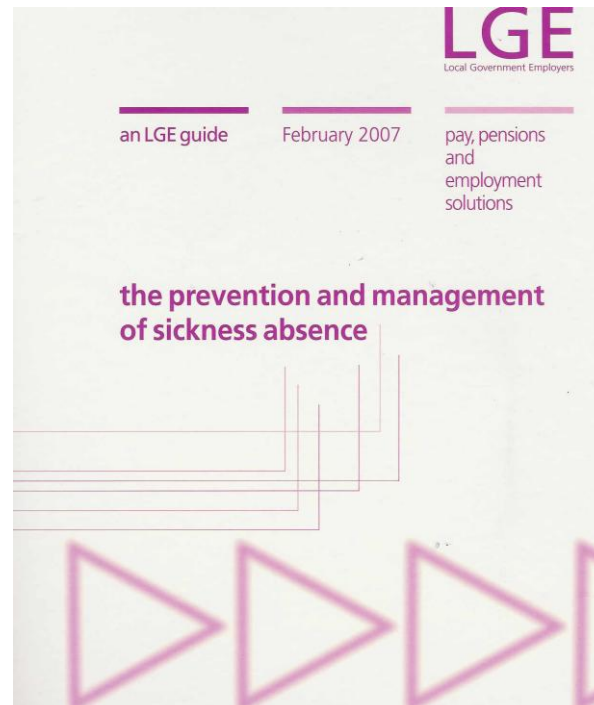
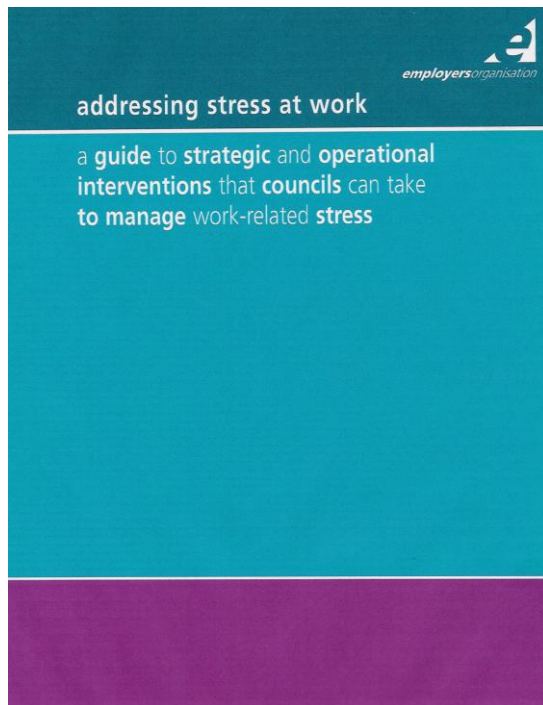
#### [Management Standards](#)

The HSE Management Standards approach is

### Resources

-  [Line Manager Competency Tool](#)
-  [e-Bulletin](#)
-  [Online forum](#)
-  [Case studies](#)

## Useful publications



Available from LGE

[www.ceepuk.org](http://www.ceepuk.org)



## **In conclusion**

- Local government is facing significant workforce challenges
- Safety an issue, health and well-being is a bigger issue
- Proactive interventions on mental health, and MSDs
- Securing the health, safety and well-being of staff is crucial to staff engagement
- Public sector including local government has a significant part to play in delivering governments strategies
- Investing in staff well-being improves health outcomes and productivity
- Good work is good for you
- Change organisational management and culture to improve jobs

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National Health  
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**[steven.sumner@lge.gov.uk](mailto:steven.sumner@lge.gov.uk)**

**[www.lge.gov.uk](http://www.lge.gov.uk)**

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**Register your  
details via the  
LGE website  
to receive our  
e-alert news  
service**

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Thank you for  
your kind  
attention

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pay, pensions  
and  
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