

STRESS CAMPAIGN



FIVE-YEAR STRESS CAMPAIGN IN DENMARK

A DESCRIPTION OF THE JOINT EFFORT
TO PREVENT WORK-RELATED STRESS AT
MUNICIPAL AND REGIONAL WORKPLACES



A STRESS CAMPAIGN IN DENMARK
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CONTENTS

3	0.0	FOREWORD	26	6.0	STRESS HANDBOOK
4	1.0	INTRODUCTION	27	6.1	STATUS OF THE EFFORT
5	1.1	AGREEMENT PACKAGE	28	7.0	OTHER PUBLICATIONS
6	1.2	DEFINITIONS	29	8.0	PERSONNEL POLICY FAIR
9	1.3	KEY CONCEPTS	29	9.0	PERSONNEL WEB
10	1.4	DISTRIBUTION OF ROLES	30	10.0	INTERVIEWS AND
11	1.5	STRATEGY			EXPERIENCES
12	1.6	AGREEMENT TEXT			
14	2.0	STRESS MAGAZINES			
20	3.0	STRESS CONFERENCE			
21	4.0	GUIDE TO HSU AND HOVEDMED			
24	5.0	LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM			
25	5.1	STAFET (BATON) MAGAZINE			
		AND NEWSLETTERS			

0.0 FOREWORD

During the last five years, regions and municipalities in Denmark have been the target of an information campaign that has supported the effort against stress at public sector workplaces. The campaign has been planned and executed by the social partners' joint cooperation body, Det Personalepolitiske Forum (The Personnel Policy Forum), which aims to place focus on main areas of personnel policy and to attend to central personnel policy discussions. The entire effort has supported stress prevention, which the European partners have agreed on with the "Draft framework agreement on work-related stress" and which the social partners in Denmark have included in the collective bargaining agreement with the "Stress Protocol of 24 May 2005". This booklet is a complete description of the special efforts implemented by the regional and municipal social partners in Denmark in order to create the best imaginable frameworks for the prevention of work-related stress.

Kind regards,

The Personnel Policy Forum [Local Government Denmark (LGDK), Danish Regions and The Danish Association of Local Government Employees' Organisations (KTO)]



1.0 INTRODUCTION

In Denmark, there is a tradition which is more than 100 years old, of the social partners having a great influence on the provisions that apply to the working environment. The forerunner of the Working Environment Council was established as early as in 1901 and here, employers and employees jointly founded the cooperation which, among other things, has led to a large number of agreements on parts of the Working Environment Act, creation of an all-embracing safety organisation and 11

working environment councils for the various industries.

The central influence from partners has increased through a large number of committees, boards and funds where both employers and employees are represented. At the same time, both the social partners and politicians in Denmark want the partners influence to continue to be strong and for it to be increased further through agreements. Moreover, both the Working Environ-

ment Act and the EU are setting the stage for more agreements on the working environment area.

The European partners' "Draft framework agreement on work-related stress" from 2004 thus forms the basis for the "Stress Protocol of 24 May 2005", which is the first example that the partners have implemented EU agreements in the collective public sector agreements.



1.1 AGREEMENT PACKAGE

The binding agreement regarding the effort against work-related stress is constructed together with the entire agreement and the collective bargaining agreement package which the regional and municipal employers entered into with KTO (The Danish Association of Local and Government Employees' Organisations) in 2005. In general, this means that the EU stress agreement will be incorporated in the SU (Cooperation Committee) and MED (Co-determination Committee, Special Danish Council for information and consulting employees) system. Thus, with the agreement, the Cooperation Committee (SU) and the Codetermination Committee in municipalities and regions have the task of determining guidelines regarding the work against stress. In those municipalities and regions where a MED agreement (see the definition box) has not been made or where the safety & health work has not been performed by a MED committee, the agreement assumes that the stress work is coordinated with the safety & health organisation.

The agreement then entails that all workplaces covered by the KTO agreement must plan and account for the work of identifying, preventing and managing problems linked to work-related stress. The current agreement thus subsequently builds onto and supplements the legislation. At the same time, through The Personnel Policy Forum, the social partners impose the initiation of a continuous campaign against work-related stress on themselves. This means that the municipal and regional employers and employees are mutually obliged to continue the debate and the work – even after the collective bargaining agreement period has expired. The purpose of the campaign is to strengthen the SU and MED committees and their members (Managers, trade union representatives and safety & health representatives) in the work of intercepting and managing work-related stress with both personnel policy and working environment instruments.

QUOTES

There is no doubt that there is reason for great awareness on the subject of stress ”

- Kristian Ebbensgaard

The European stress agreement has been a really good door opener for the stress work ”

- Dennis Kristensen

The campaign has ensured a far better employee identification and it has worked brilliantly ”

- Michael Ziegler

**View the interviews
at pages 30-31**

1.2 TABLE OF DEFINITIONS

TABLE OF DEFINITIONS	
COOPERATION COMMITTEE (SU)	<p>At all municipal and regional workplaces, with at least 25 employees, a Cooperation Committee (SU) must be established. Each social partner normally elects three to seven representatives, depending on the size and employee composition of the workplace.</p> <p>SU holds at least four ordinary meetings per year and must organise principles for the working and well-being conditions as well as personnel policy. Via SU, management informs on the institution's conditions and development.</p> <p>The work in the SU is determined by cooperation agreements between the partners in the public sector, LGDK, Danish Regions and KTO.</p>
CODETERMINATION COMMITTEE (MED) IN MUNICIPALITIES AND REGIONS	<p>A MED agreement is a framework agreement that builds further on and can replace the Cooperation agreement as it makes it possible for the social partners at a local level in municipalities and regions to develop the cooperation organisation enabling the partners themselves to agree on the local structure, form and content for the contributory influence.</p> <p>A MED agreement also makes it possible to combine the safety & health organisation with the Cooperation Committee.</p> <p>The MED system is built up around a main committee and a number of sub-committees. The main committee is the uppermost committee for contributory influence and co-determination and the uppermost committee on the working environment area.</p>

TABLE OF DEFINITIONS	
THE SAFETY AND HEALTH ORGANISATION	<p>All municipal and regional enterprises with at least 10 employees must establish a safety & health organisation.</p> <p>A safety & health organisation is typically constructed in such a way that each department/supervisor area forms a safety & health group. This means that each institution in the municipality or region must have its own safety & health group consisting of the leader and the safety & health representative.</p> <p>According to the MED agreement model, another construction of the safety organisation can be agreed on and its tasks can be managed by a MED committee, which then also manages the Cooperation Committee's tasks. The prerequisite is however, that the working environment is strengthened.</p>
THE PERSONNEL POLICY FORUM AND THE SOCIAL PARTNERS	<p>The Personnel Policy Forum is a debate forum comprising the social partners LGDK (Local Government Denmark), Danish Regions and KTO (The Danish Association of Local Government Employees' Organisations).</p> <p>LGDK represents the 98 municipalities.</p> <p>Danish Regions represents the 5 regions.</p> <p>KTO is the joint negotiating body for 46 trade unions, whose members are employed in municipalities and regions (the former counties) corresponding to approx. 548,000 of the approx. 630,000 employees.</p> <p>The Forum attends to central personnel policy discussions, prepares analyses and places focus on the need for personnel policy areas of work.</p>



1.3 KEY CONCEPTS

From the outset, the social partners decided to employ a triple approach to work-related stress:

Identification:
How do we find out if there is stress at our workplace – and where?

Prevention:
How do we avoid stress that is harmful to health and chronic stress?

Managing:
What will we do if someone experiences stress?

But the focal point of the work is the ideas about prevention. To a large degree, this characterises the many initiatives and publications, which – from autumn 2005 and onwards – will be the biggest partner-based effort against work-related stress in the history of Denmark. Both in terms of the involvement of employees, managers and workplaces are concerned – as well as in terms of the utilisation of material.

The social partners are also constantly focusing on explaining that stress is a mutual issue at the workplace. And that stress prevention must be closely associated to the daily tasks. In connection with the guide on the task of finding actual guidelines for the stress effort, which the partners will send out to SU and MED committees, the choice has been to split the task into two principle objectives:

The working day stress effort:
“The guidelines shall support the managers’ and employees’ own efforts

in relation to preventing, identifying and managing stress in an often busy working day”.

The general stress effort:
The guidelines shall “... establish which activities, offers, tools and methods that must be available in the municipality or region in order to identify, manage and prevent stress”.

TABLE OF DEFINITIONS	
THE AGREEMENT REGARDING WORK-RELATED STRESS	The agreement regarding work-related stress is part of the collective bargaining agreement settlement that was entered into between Local Government Denmark (LGDK) and the Amtsrådsforening (now Danish Regions) on the one side – and The Danish Association of Local Government Employees’ Organisation (KTO) on the other in 2005 (OK-05 – Collective Bargaining Agreement 2005).
THE AGREEMENT REGARDING WELL-BEING AND HEALTH	
	The contents of the agreement was prepared as a protocol which also influences the framework agreement for MED and the agreement text regarding trade union representatives, cooperation and cooperation committees, respectively.
	With OK 08 (Collective Bargaining Agreement 2008), the agreement regarding work-related stress was carried on and included a new agreement about well-being and health, which also contains provisions regarding, e.g. well-being and measurement of well-being, health promotion as well as violence, bullying and harassment.
	In this connection, the European agreement “Framework agreement on harassment and violence at work” from 26 April 2007 is also implemented in the agreement.

1.4 DISTRIBUTION OF ROLES

The distribution of roles in the task of preventing stress at the municipal and regional workplaces in Denmark is clearly described in “The Stress Protocol of 24 May 2005” and in a number of the publications that are sent out in support of the workplaces:

The social partners in **The Personnel Policy Forum** ensure that initiatives are activated and materials are published that support: The workplaces’ duty to put work-related stress on the agenda, the SU/MED committees’ duty to prepare guidelines for the work with stress – and also to support the implementation of the stress agreement at the municipal and regional workplaces.

The Main Cooperation Committee (hsu)/MainMED is responsible for preparing guidelines in cooperation with the Safety & Health Committee (SiU).

The board of Directors/senior management has the task of giving the stress effort status and legitimacy – as well as ensuring priority and resources.

The HR and Working Environment staff contributes to the development of methods and offers training/education to managers and employees.

Managers are responsible for the stress effort functioning in the working day – in cooperation with the employees. At the same time, the managers have a responsibility to be aware of their own stress.

Together, **employees** must participate in the development of the working day’s stress effort. They must be aware of their own and others’ stress symptoms and take action accordingly.

Trade union representatives and safety & health representatives (TR/SR) must support and monitor the effort against work-related stress. At the same time, they are responsible for defining their roles so they are not perceived as the workplace’s “stress therapists”.

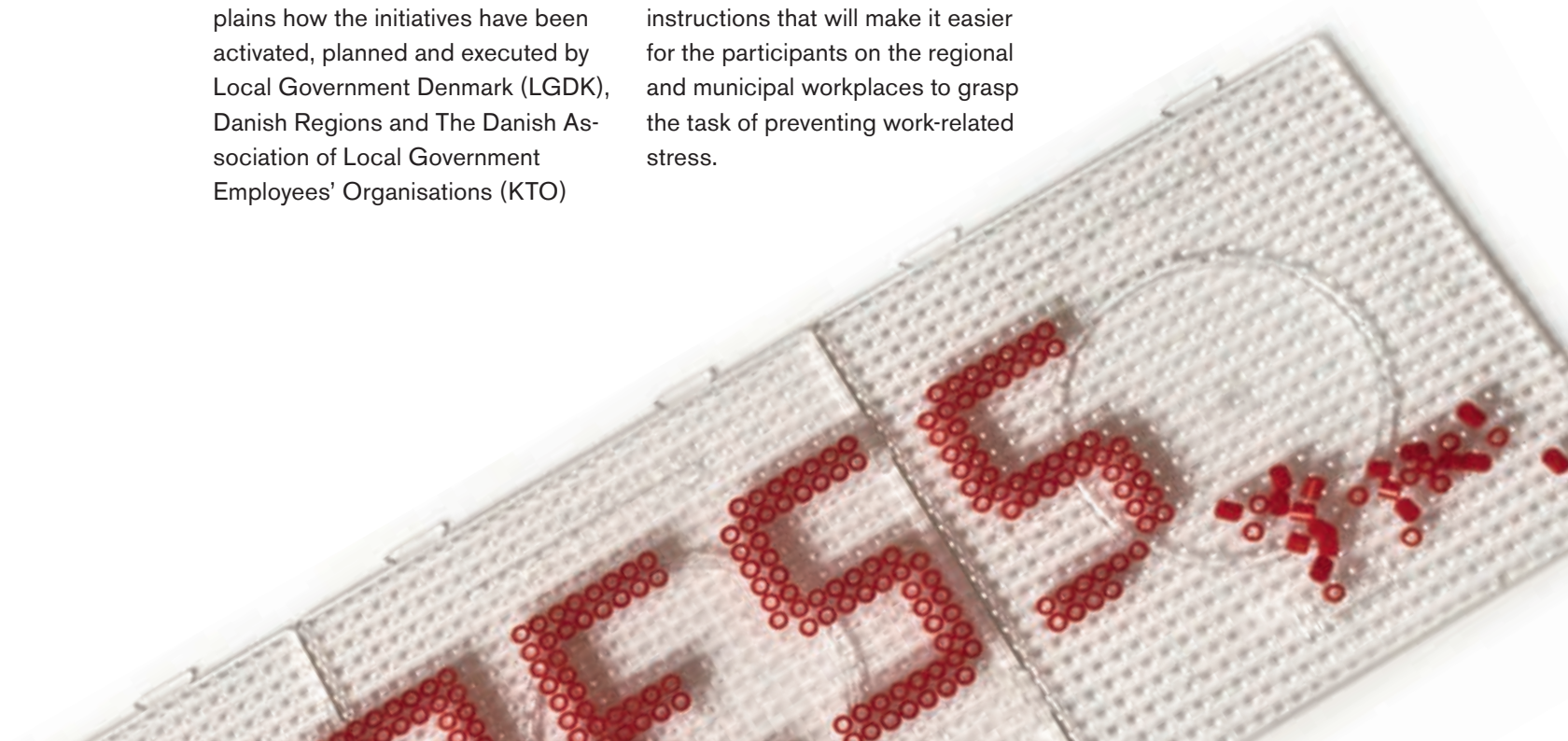
1.5 THE STRATEGY

The strategy for implementing the “Stress Protocol of 24 May 2005”, which contains the provisions which the European partners agreed on in the “Draft framework agreement on work-related stress” is thus compiled by the social partners. This booklet focuses on the strategy and on all the actual initiatives that have been activated in connection with the implementation of the strategy. It explains how the initiatives have been activated, planned and executed by Local Government Denmark (LGDK), Danish Regions and The Danish Association of Local Government Employees’ Organisations (KTO)

together through the Personnel Policy Forum. And finally, a closer look is taken at the results that have resulted from the joint effort.

From the beginning, the social partners in The Personnel Policy Forum decided to create the communication around a very direct and operational tone. Tools, conferences and publications will contain examples and instructions that will make it easier for the participants on the regional and municipal workplaces to grasp the task of preventing work-related stress.

Therefore the choice was also, to a great extent, to have a journalistic approach. Thus, the strategy was to make sure that all communication should be flowing, angled and easy to integrate into the daily work and that the use of pictures, logo and graphic design should ensure recognition and identification.



1.6. AGREEMENT TEXT AND PROTOCOL ON WORK-RELATED STRESS

Guidelines on identifying, preventing and managing work-related stress is agreed on with OK-05 (Collective Bargaining Agreement 2005). The relevant paragraphs from the MED and SU agreement can be seen here and a section of the Protocol on the efforts against work-related stress. *)

Framework agreement on contributory influence and co-determination

§ 8, section 4
Guidelines shall be agreed on for the workplace's combined effort in order to identify, prevent and manage problems linked to work-related stress, cf. attached protocol (appendix 9) on the effort against work-related stress.

If the safety and health work is not handled by a MED committee, it is required that the work is coordinated with the safety & health organisation.

Source: Framework agreement on contributory influence and co-determination on 1 April 2005. The (county) municipal social partners and The Danish Association of Local Government Employees' Organisations (KTO).

Agreement on trade union representatives, cooperation and cooperation committees

§ 17, section 3
Guidelines shall be agreed on for the workplace's combined effort in order to identify, prevent and manage problems linked to work-related stress, cf. attached protocol (appendix 11)

on the effort against work-related stress. The work must be coordinated with the safety & health organisation.

Source: Agreement on trade union representatives, cooperation and cooperation committees, on 1 April 2005. The (county) municipal social partners and The Danish Association of Local Government Employees' Organisations (KTO).

Protocol on the work against work-related stress

Agreement partners: Local Government Denmark (LGDK), Danish Regions, City of Copenhagen, Frederiksberg Municipality and the Danish Association of Local Government Employees' Organisations (KTO).

PROTOCOL

Introduction

This protocol concerns the workplace's measures to reduce or minimise the occurrence of work-related stress.

Stress can potentially affect any workplace and any employee regardless of the size of the enterprise, the type of work, or the type of employment conditions. In practice, not all workplaces or all employees will necessarily be affected by stress. The prevention of work-related stress can improve safety and health and lead to greater efficiency. For the enterprise, the employees and for society as a whole, this can have economic, occupational and social consequences. It is important to consider that the employees are different when managing work-related stress.

The objectives of the protocol on the measures against work-related stress are to:

- Increase the awareness and understanding of employers, employees and their representatives about work-related stress
- Increase their awareness with regard to signals that indicate work-related stress

The aim is to provide management and employees with a framework in order to identify, prevent and manage problems linked to work-related stress. The aim is not to place the blame for stress-related problems on the individual.

The social partners agree that with this protocol, The Danish Association of Local Government Employees' Organisations (KTO) and the (county) municipal employer partners, have im-

plemented the European agreement, the "Draft framework agreement on work-related stress" entered into between UNICE, CEEP and ETUC on 8 October 2004.

*) The other parts of the Protocol are similar to the European agreement in its content – including definition, responsibility, as well as identification, prevention and elimination of work-related stress.



2.0 STRESS MAGAZINES

From December 2005 and during the course of the following 12 months, the social partners of The Personnel Policy Forum published a total of four magazines, each containing 40 pages. Each of the magazines is structured as a number of articles with cases, background, experience interviews, expert statements, facts and general inspiration.

The four magazines use the general strategy as the foundation. Namely, that it must concern information

aimed at stress prevention, that the information is presented in an angled and journalistic manner, that the communication must be operationally motivating and applicable to working life at the public sector workplaces and that the communication is directed to the target groups at the workplace which need the actual information.

Therefore, each of the four magazines is also targeted towards a specific target group in the stress project:

Magazine number 1: Addresses members of the SU and MED committees

Magazine number 2: Addresses the political level and the organisations senior managers.

Magazine number 3: Addresses the local managers and employees – and thematises the local cooperation

Magazine number 4: Addresses more broadly the participants – and thematises the personal responsibility in the fight against work-related stress.



2.1. STRESS MAGAZINE 1:

“The MED committee puts stress on the agenda”

In the first magazine, the focus is primarily on becoming familiar with the definitions. What are we actually talking about when the conversation turns to work-related stress? In its articles, the magazine also supports the existing agreement, that the MED committees are responsible for compiling guidelines for stress measures at the workplaces. There are concrete examples of what a MED agreement looks like and how already existing tools can be used in the work with the prevention of stress, e.g. by using stress measuring or workplace evaluations for mapping the workplace's stress problem.

The magazine also contains a number of inspiring articles from Sweden, Bornholm and the company, Danfoss, respectively. In addition, there is a

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www.personaleweb.dk/stress-magasinet1



large number of articles with personal stories and portraits of workplaces that have significant knowledge to share in connection with the organising of the work with stress prevention and stress management.

In the first magazine, the chairmanship of The Personnel Policy Forum also introduces the initiative and explains the importance of making an effort in relation to stress prevention at the regional and municipal workplaces.

STRESS MUST NOT JUST BECOME A PERSONAL PROBLEM. IT ALWAYS HAS AN ORGANISATIONAL SIDE TO IT AS WELL. ”

- ANETTE FRIEDRICHS,
ALLERØD MUNICIPALITY

2.2. STRESS MAGAZINE 2:

“Money can be saved when management prevents stress”

The second Stress magazine focuses on the political and management responsibility. Therefore, the Minister of Employment in Denmark, Claus Hjort Frederiksen, has the opportunity to place focus on the role of senior management in one of the magazine's key articles.

Besides a large number of actual proposals as to how public managers can put stress prevention on the agenda, Stress magazine 2 also contains a so-called temperature measurement of the stress level among ma-

WHERE SENIOR MANAGEMENT HAS TAKEN UP THE SUBJECT, WE SEE GOOD RESULTS IN PREVENTING STRESS. ”

CLAUS HJORT FREDERIKSEN, MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT, DENMARK

nagers and employees in a number of selected municipalities. Again, this issue contains inspiring articles. This time, from, among others, Støvring and Helsingør municipalities and the City of Copenhagen. The Working Environment Institute's (AMI) survey on the mental working environment

– including stress – at regional and municipal workplaces is also published. And finally, there is a calculation of the costs of stress.



Download: The second Stress magazine can be downloaded in PDF format from: www.personaleweb.dk/stress-magasinet2

2.3. STRESS MAGAZINE 3:

“Managers and employees must attack stress in the working day”

STRESS IS NOT PREVENTED BY HIRING A CONSULTANT WHO THEN COMES AND ENTERTAINS FOR A SINGLE DAY. STRESS BEGINS WITH YOURSELF. ”

PIA RYOM, ARBEJDSMEDICINSK KLINIK, AALBORG (OCCUPATIONAL MEDICAL CLINIC, AALBORG)

In the third Stress magazine there is particular focus on the local managers' and employees' possibilities of identifying, managing and preventing stress at municipal and regional workplaces

To a large extent, the articles are action-oriented and fall under headings like: “Joint efforts in the working day”, “Healthy management – healthy employees”, “A good chat among colleagues” and “The good meeting prevents stress” all concerning the practical approaches and options that exist at the workplaces in order to organise the work with stress prevention.



In May 2006 when the third Stress magazine was issued, Pia Ryom, the leading psychologist at the Occupational Medical Clinic at Aalborg Hospital, was busy developing stress preventing tools for workplaces within the social and health area. The work with the stress tools was initiated by the Branche Arbejds miljø Rådet (Industry Working Environment Council) for the social and health area (BAR SoSu). The article “Do It Yourself” in the Stress magazine dealt with what things provoke stress at a workplace, how to avoid the stress elements and on the whole work according to recognised methods. An example

of a workplace that was part of the project describes in the article, “We don't fuss, we appreciate”, how the kitchen and canteen staff at Aarhus Hospital experienced a boost in the mental working environment and a relief from the stress loads. The tools developed by BAR SoSu later became an important and highly recognised instrument in the work with stress within the social and health area.

Download: The third Stress magazine can be downloaded in PDF format from: www.personaleweb.dk/stress-magasinet3

2.4. STRESS MAGAZINE 4:

“You can personally do a lot to avoid stress”

In the fourth Stress magazine, the focus is turned inwards. It often transpires that the demands which the employees in municipalities and regions place on themselves and on their efforts are what they are most aware of. Much more so than the demands placed on them by politicians, managers and others. Therefore, the magazine almost overflows with good and direct advice as to how you, as an individual, can listen to your working environment and your inner self so

you can better identify, prevent and manage work-related stress. Regardless of whether you are a manager or an employee.

Besides the many direct and various kinds of advice – the fourth Stress magazine also had its starting point in the fact that the personal responsibility can never stand alone. By referring to the other three magazines, the fourth magazine was also able to make a summary of all the other partners at the workplace and in the organisation. They also have a responsibility for the functioning of the working environment and that actions are taken in terms of work-related stress. Those partners are: The MED, Cooperation and Safety Committees, politicians, senior managers, local managers and employee representatives.

And even though the fourth magazine concludes the series and thus closes the ring of journalistic, adapted, action-oriented articles; the magazine also shot out a solid thread into the



future and promised a number of initiatives - including among others, a handbook on stress and a guide for the MED and SU Committees on how they can work with actual guidelines in connection with the stress measures at the workplace.

Download: The fourth Stress magazine can be downloaded in PDF format from: www.personaleweb.dk/stress-magasinet4

OF COURSE, IT'S UP TO THE INDIVIDUAL TO TAKE CARE OF HIS OR HER STRESS – WHO ELSE? I WOULD RATHER NOT HAVE OTHERS DECIDE WHAT WORKS FOR ME”

- LISBETH NIELSSON,
STRESS COACH

2.5. STRESS MAGAZINES IN PERSPECTIVE

The four Stress magazines were particularly well received at the municipal and regional workplaces and also among senior management and politicians. The entire strategy of communicating stress knowledge as journalistic articles in a great and inviting design proved to be the absolutely right thing. 15,000 copies of the first magazine were printed and as a result of the demand, the edition has increased from magazine to magazine so the fourth magazine was released in an edition that was almost double the size. But at the same time, the tremendous interest in using the magazines actively at the workplaces meant that the number of downloads from the partners' joint website, www.personaleweb.dk by far exceeded the total number of printed magazines. In total, more than 125,000 downloads have been registered, which again have been printed out in an even larger number of copies. From the outset, the social partners had decided that the magazine should be available to all interested people as a

print-friendly PDF-version which could be downloaded for free from the joint website at the same moment the printed magazine was issued.

The editor-in-chief of the four Stress magazines, Hans Hvenegaard, is not for one moment in doubt that the strategy of making MED and SU committees responsible by the agreement and to inspire and motivate the participants with the help of journalism on good cases and background articles was the right decision from the start:

“One of the main views behind the campaign was that the stress measures take time. Therefore, it also made good sense that the campaign was planned so the initiatives and the magazines came about gradually. But in reality, what is just as important is that the social partners did not target the individual in relation to the work of stress prevention. The entire campaign focuses on how the organisation, the collective and the cooperation could manage the stress measures and,

in reality, this reflects quite well the mentality of the Danish labour market,” says Hans Hvenegaard.

As a consequence of the approach the social partners have chosen, Hans Hvenegaard also believes that there has been success in maintaining focus so that the stress measures have remained a working environment effort instead of being a health policy effort. This could be an obvious risk if the individual was in focus instead of the organisation.



3.0. STRESS CONFERENCE IN ODENSE

Simultaneously with the publishing of the first Stress magazine, The Personnel Policy Forum gathered more than 1,000 participants for an opening conference on stress in the city of Odense. Despite the short registration deadline and the fact that it was held at the beginning of December 2005, it resulted nevertheless in overwhelming interest and over-registration, which already from the start of the campaign demonstrated the participants' and the workplaces' desire to fling themselves into the work of stress prevention. The day in Odense was packed with workshops and presentations from Denmark's most competent stress experts.

In his opening address, the former chairman of The Personnel Policy Forum, Herlev's mayor, Kjeld Hansen, emphasised the fact that it was high time to put a stop to work-related stress: "I hope that we will go home with a common understanding that this task is incredibly important. That it is a task we simply **MUST** solve. And in ten years, when we look at the

public sector workplaces, we can get together and say: We tackled it, we got it under control and we have developed the management of it."

It was also a very satisfied former deputy chairman of The Personnel Policy Forum, BUPL (The Danish Federation of Social Educators) chairman, Birgit Elgaard, who took stock of a day of more than 20 lectures and experience-saturated listeners: "Even though everything now depends on which experiences have been gathered and what projects will be launched, I think that today has already been such a huge success that I believe that "well begun is half done".



4.0 GUIDE FOR HSU/MAINMED

In April 2007, the social partners of The Personnel Policy Forum produced a complete guide to the HSU/MainMED Committees in regions and municipalities on how they can actually work at compiling guidelines for the stress prevention measures. The guide compiles the responsibility and the set of rules under which the committees will work and which are subject to the collective bargaining agreement. The guide also reviews the various conditions that can trigger work-related stress.

It takes a closer look at the roles of the various participants in the organisation in connection with the stress measures and finally, it has a number of source references where more background knowledge and inspiration can be found for the work with the stress measures and guidelines.

One of the key sections in the guide is a list of the stress factors that affect both managers and employees in the organisation. (See 4.1.)



4.1. GOOD PREVENTION AGAINST STRESS BEGINS HERE!

Many years' research and work with the psychological working environment and stress has created solid knowledge about which factors undermine job satisfaction and well-being and create stress. These are:

Too large or conflicting demands at work

- The quantitative demands in the form of a too large work volume or time pressure
- The qualitative demands in the form of conflicting or high demands on social, emotional or cognitive qualifications.

Lack of influence

- Lack of influence on the content, organisation, execution of the work and the placement of the working hours.

Lack of meaning in the work

- If you cannot see your own contribution to the total service
- If the purpose of what you do is not in accordance with your own or ordinary values.

Unpredictability

- If you do not have knowledge and information about what will happen in the future – in relation to your own work as well as in relation to the development and readjustment of the workplace.

Lack of social support

- Insufficient support, feedback, support from managers and colleagues.

Lack of reward

- Injustices in salary, distribution of tasks or promotion. Insufficient recognition and appreciation in relation to the work.

In addition to this there are some value-based issues at the workplace:

Mistrust and lack of credibility

- Insufficient trust between manager and employees or between colleagues.

Unfairness and lack of respect

- Lack of mutual respect and recognition of differences.



Download: "Guide for HSU/ mainMED" can be downloaded in PDF format from:
www.personaleweb.dk/stress-vejledning

5.0 WORKING ENVIRONMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

On 1 January 2007, Denmark went through the biggest structure and task reform in the history of Denmark, which converted the entire municipal and county-municipal structure. 271 primary municipalities were consolidated into 98 municipalities. 14 counties were consolidated into five – significantly – larger regions. The distribution of tasks was changed.

In order to create an overview of how the local government reform would affect the municipal and regional employees, The Personnel Policy Forum conducted a survey among 3,000 employees in 2006.

- Among other things, the following became apparent:
- That two out of three employees would be directly affected by the local government reform
 - That every tenth employee would have a completely new work function.
 - That 14 percent would have a new workplace
 - That almost every second employee did not know how the reform would affect their working environment
 - That 42 percent considered looking for new jobs in connection with the reform.

These are all factors that illustrate a bit of the degree of stress which the local government reform imposed on employees in regions and municipalities and which thus also came to play a significant role in the entire stress prevention work in connection with the implementation of the stress protocol and the “Draft framework agreement on work-related stress”. To a certain extent, the survey also formed the basis for the editorial outlines on publishing the Stafet (Baton) magazine and the three newsletters about the local government reform and the working environment.

5.1 STAFET MAGAZINE AND NEWSLETTERS

The social partners in The Personnel Policy Forum wanted to promote the merger process and to prevent the many changes from developing into serious stress factors for the employees in the new merging municipalities and regions. Therefore, the partners chose to place the spotlight on stress and the working environment in connection with a so-called Stafet (Baton) project where a 24-page magazine was issued in the same layout as the Stress magazines in January 2007. The new magazine communicated a number of working environment projects in the new Danish structure – and everyone gained experience. Something the magazine focused particularly on in the articles

was how much networks, dialogue, humour and competences mean in the working environment during a time of change. After the release of the magazine, the social partners followed up on the stories by publishing three newsletters to the public sector workplaces with brief articles. Among the many articles in the newsletters, attention was focused on, among other things, the network between personnel in the new Region South Denmark, on ten institutions in Roskilde, which were the leaders in the stress measures – and on the municipality of Varde, where the stress baton helped to retain focus on well-being through a turbulent time.



The Stafet (Baton) also functioned as a sculptural version of the campaign's stress logo.

Download: Stafet magazine can be downloaded in PDF format from:
www.personaleweb.dk/stafet-magasin1



6.0. STRESS HANDBOOK

In March 2008, The Personnel Policy Forum published the largest printed matter of the social partners' joint stress effort. The stress handbook: "Stop stress – create well-being together" is a staggering 124 pages long, which both gathers experiences from the first phase in the implementation of the stress agreement and also inspires for the continued work with stress prevention at the municipal and regional workplaces. The layout of the handbook is identical to the magazines and the guide to MED (Codetermination Committee). In so doing, recognition is ensured in relation to the other publications. On the other hand, the handbook distinguishes itself from the magazines by being split into chapters, whereas the magazines were a combination of a number of independent and journalistically angled articles.

The stress handbook is divided into three main sections where the first, to a large extent, concerns ensuring a common understanding of the terms psychological working environment

and stress. The introductory chapters also pin point the fundamental principles of systematic stress measures, just as they point at various options to organise the work to **identify**, **manage** and **prevent** stress at the workplace.

The second part of the handbook concentrates on the actual work against stress in the working day. Included is a definition of the most significant stress factors that are at stake when this concerns the content and organising of the work, value conflicts at work, communication and cooperation as well as management.

The third and final chapter of the book focuses on the general frameworks for stress measures. This also includes the distribution of roles among managers, politicians as well as members of the Codetermination (MED) Committee, the Cooperation Committee and the Safety & Health Committee.

As a very special element, each chapter in the handbook is supplied with a number of dialogue questions which can be used by all members of the organisation to articulate the actual challenges, clarify needs and possibilities for a combined effort on the concerned area. At the same time, the Stress Handbook also contains a large number of literature references and recommendations for further reading.

The Stress Handbook was printed in an edition of 28,000 copies and it can still be obtained as a PDF file on <http://www.personaleweb.dk>.



6.1 STATUS OF THE STRESS EFFORT

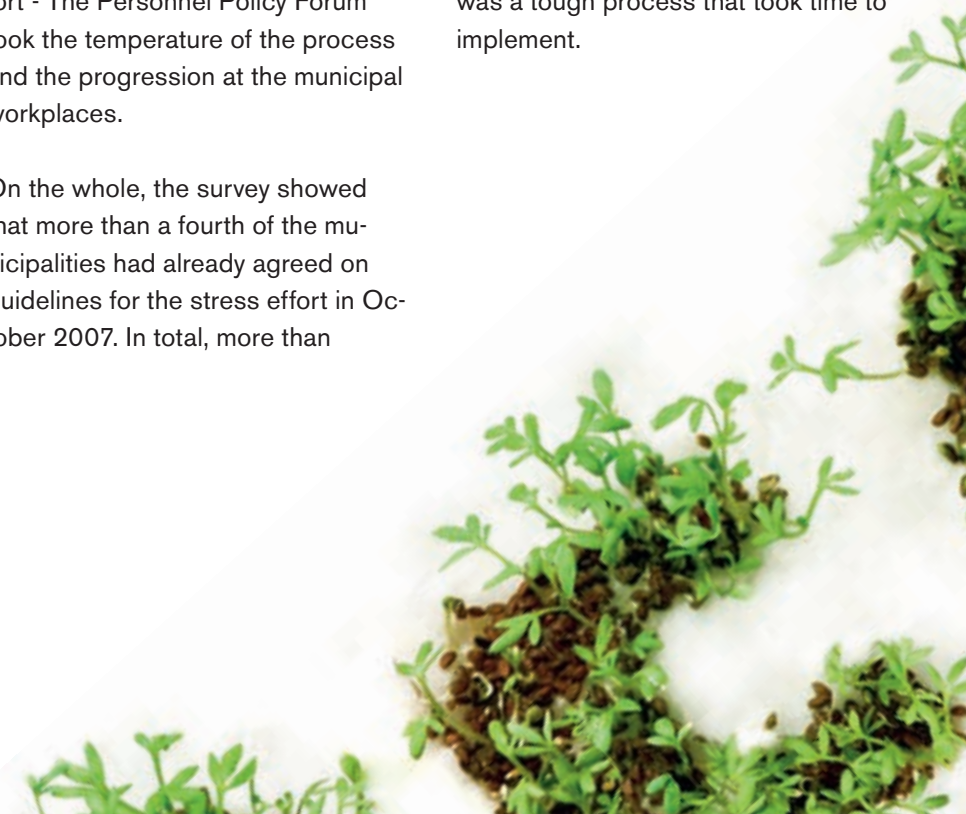
As in the case of the Stress magazines, Team-Arbejdsliv and director, Hans Hvedegaard, had the editorial responsibility for the content of the Stress Handbook. He says: "The handbook makes it clear that the stress effort cannot just rely on a short-term campaign or on an initiative that is executed every five years. It has to be part of the everyday life. The agreement creates the framework, but it is the continuous work that makes a difference. The social partners agreed on this and with the Stress Handbook, the issues that need to be completed will be clarified and explained to the partners in order to integrate stress prevention in the daily work. I think it was a tremendous thing that there was political agreement on compiling one document that really goes into the challenges in depth. And I think that the Stress Handbook has succeeded in doing so".

Download: "The Stress Handbook" can be downloaded in PDF format from: www.personaleweb.dk/stresshaandbogen

The Stress Handbook was published basically at the same time as when all the regional and municipal workplaces - because of the Codetermination (MED) Committees' work - had set their own deadline for having compiled guidelines for the stress effort. Six months earlier, in October 2007 - approximately two years after the partners had launched the stress effort - The Personnel Policy Forum took the temperature of the process and the progression at the municipal workplaces.

On the whole, the survey showed that more than a fourth of the municipalities had already agreed on guidelines for the stress effort in October 2007. In total, more than

three quarters of the municipalities were busy working on the process. For the regions, more than half had started the process. The conclusion was that comprehensive work with stress prevention was on the way at the municipal and regional workplaces, that there was great variation in the solution models which the workplaces carried out - but also that it was a tough process that took time to implement.



7.0. OTHER IMPORTANT PUBLICATIONS

In connection with the campaign, a number of publications have been issued – in addition to those described earlier in this booklet. Among others:

Well-being and Lean - strengthen the balance in the Lean Process
Published in May 2008 in 10,000 copies.

The booklet is aimed at workplaces which are in the process of introducing Lean or are considering to do so. Many different things in the process of introducing Lean can provoke insecurity and a feeling of stress among employees at the workplace – even though in reality the purpose of Lean is quite the opposite. On the 20 pages, the booklet provides a number of recommendations in connection with the Lean process and it explains the many experiences that have been gained in connection with the LGDK/KTO project “Municipal Lean without stress”, which also has its roots in The Personnel Policy Forum’s work against work-related stress.

Management without borders seven tips to managers for creating well-being in the borderless work.
Published in September 2008 in 30,000 copies.

More and more employees and managers need to relate to even more unclear borders between work life and leisure time and thus they need to find ways to secure the working environment from borderless work. Previously, there was only a small group of specialists who had to relate to: Where, when and how the work had to be executed. Everyone else had fixed frameworks about the work. Today, a great many municipal and regional employees and managers enjoy the freedom that borderless work offers, but they are all also affected by the responsibility that follows by having to define their tasks and to set up the frameworks for their own working life. The booklet addresses a number of tips to managers at the municipal and regional workplaces so they can promote well-being and reduce stress for the many employees

in the organisation who need to grow accustomed borderless work. The booklet’s tips and content builds on a number of interviews with experts, elected trade union representatives, managers and HR managers.



Download: “Well-being and Lean” can be downloaded in PDF format from:
www.personaleweb.dk/trivsel-oglean

Download: “Management without borders” can be downloaded in PDF format from:
www.personaleweb.dk/graenser

8.0. PERSONNEL POLICY FAIR

The Personnel Policy Fair is Denmark’s biggest fair for personnel policy and the common forum where the social partners, managers, employees and the workplaces can motivate each other and show the progress and development of the initiatives they have taken. The fair was held in August 2006 in Bella Center near Copenhagen. At the time, the stress effort was well underway and the fourth Stress magazine had just been published. Therefore, the stress effort

was given a good and central placement at the fair where various events, films on big screens, lectures and distribution of the magazines placed extra focus on stress prevention for many of the visitors.

The Personnel Policy Fair in January 2010 in Bella Center will round off this stress effort by the partners. This concerns a total flashback of five years’ intense work with stress prevention at the regional and muni-

cipal workplaces. This booklet is just a simple and modest element in the rounding off of the campaign and the effort. Under one of the three main themes that will characterise the fair, good stories will be related about the stress effort from the many public sector workplaces. Knowledge and inspiration will be exchanged and further work will be done with the development of the modern and attractive workplace.

9.0 PERSONNEL WEB

A significant and pivotal element in the communication of the many initiatives, data, experiences and publications that have characterised the last five years’ work with work-related stress at municipal and regional workplaces, is the social partners’ joint web portal: **www.personaleweb.dk**

The site functions as a combined entrance to the partners’ joint activities and through a manageable menu system, there is access to all the

material and information that is relevant in connection with the individual focus areas – thus also the stress effort. Here, you can find everything from the protocol to surveys and publications in print-friendly PDF formats. The primary target group of **www.personaleweb.dk** is managers and employee representatives, but the site is open and all material is available to anyone with interest in the material and the stress effort.

In September 2009, the site has been through a thorough review and expansion with the presentation of what creates stress, tools for the identification of stress, methods and tools for the prevention of stress, games to clarify competence needs in relation to prevention and management of stress, courses that support the implementation and follow-up of the agreement as well as agreements and experiences with guidelines.

10. INTERVIEWS AND EXPERIENCES



KRISTIAN EBBENSGAARD

Danish Regions, Member of The Personnel Policy Forum

Organising the cooperation between the social partners has its own strength, thus you enter into agreements about frameworks for the various efforts and initiatives, believes Kristian Ebbensgaard. To him, there is no doubt about the fact that there is far more support and anchoring at the workplaces when it is done in this way. With regard to the effort against work-related stress, he believes that

the campaign and the result show that it has been the right strategy.

Kristian Ebbensgaard also believes that the stress effort must always have a high priority: "Regardless of whether the inspiration had come from the EU or elsewhere, there is no doubt that there is reason for great awareness on the subject of stress and on the psychological working environment as a whole. But you could also say that the European agreement about work-related stress, under all circumstances, is a very wide recognition of and acceptance that the problem exists – and that something must be done about it. With regard to the way we have organised the campaign here in Denmark, the expectations have definitely been realised when looking at the great demand for the campaign material. And I also believe that the material has been used diligently at the workplaces", he says.



DENNIS KRISTENSEN

FOA, KTO, Deputy Chairman of The Personnel Policy Forum

"You should constantly keep a critical eye on whether the agreements that are made between the social partners also are binding in a suitable way. And whether you risk pouring too much work onto, e.g. the Cooperation and Codetermination (MED) Committees", believes Dennis Kristensen. Having said that, he also believes that there is big reason to be pleased about the many local ac-

tivities which have been conducted in connection with the stress campaign and that great advances have been made at the individual workplaces with regard to the stress effort.

"The European stress agreement has been a really good door opener for the stress work in regions and municipalities. In connection with the local government reform, there were a large number of themes which we nevertheless could focus on and in this regard the stress agreement worked as an extra motivating force to take hold of the themes. Among other things, there was the employees' security; there was the question about knowledge and influence that were at risk. And this is altogether something that is also directly linked to work-related stress. Therefore, you could say that good interaction came about between the process surrounding the local government reform and the stress effort," says Dennis Kristensen.



MICHAEL ZIEGLER

Local Government Denmark, Chairman of The Personnel Policy Forum

There is always a huge challenge in ensuring that everything the social partners have discussed at a theoretical level also make a difference at the individual workplace, believes Michael Ziegler. The workplaces' interest in the campaign and the material shows, to a great extent, that success has been achieved in motivating the workplaces and employees: "It was a good thing that we decided to compile the campaign journalistically so that we – by

means of articles and magazines - have targeted the information to the individual employee. When you are part of the Cooperation or Codetermination (MED) Committee and compile the guidelines, then it has a certain level of abstraction and therefore it can be difficult for employees to relate to the process and feel that it has relevance. The campaign has ensured a far better employee identification and it has worked brilliantly," says Michael Ziegler.

Nor is he nervous that the dynamics which the campaign has initiated will disappear:

"The effort continues as part of OK-08 (Collective Bargaining Agreement 2008). Now, it has just become part of the agreement on well-being at workplaces, so you could say that it has received an even more positive packaging, but the effort continues. Where there are people, where actions are taken, where work is done quickly and many things must be achieved, there will always be challenges on this area," he says.

PERSONNEL WEB ...

is the focal point for the communication of the many initiatives, data, experiences and publications that have characterised the last five years' work with work-related stress at the municipal and regional workplaces.

www.personaleweb.dk functions as a total access point to the social partners'

joint activities and through a manageable menu system, there is access to all material and information.

The material which is published in connection with the stress effort – and which is mentioned in this booklet – are all gathered under:

www.personaleweb.dk/stress

THE PERSONNEL POLICY FORUM...

is a debate forum comprising the social partners LGDK (Local Government Denmark), Danish Regions and KTO (The Danish Association of Local Government Employees' Organisations).

The Forum attends to central personnel policy discussions, prepares analyses, places focus on the need for personnel policy areas of work and is also the organiser of personnel policy conferences and fairs.

LGDK represents the 98 municipalities.

Danish Regions represents the 5 regions.

KTO is the joint negotiating body for 46 trade unions.

DANISH
REGIONS

