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**Enabling local  
ownership of  
occupational health  
management  
through insight and  
guidance ”**



everyone fit  
for the future

Network Rail, like many large organisations, operates in a devolved, matrix fashion with central departments responsible for acting as ‘enablers’ through the provision of effective strategies, policies, guidance and resources, and local business units (‘Routes and Functions’) responsible for running the day-to-day business and implementing the appropriate centrally-produced guidance and resources in a way that allows them to achieve the strategic aims in a locally-tailored manner.

As part of the strategic implementation plan for Network Rail’s ten-year Occupational Health and Wellbeing Strategy (OHWS), it was agreed that every business unit would develop a series of local improvement plans. Over the ten year period of the plan, they would outline how they intended to use the centrally developed controls, interventions and resources to address specific health hazards.

Reflecting two key occupational health risks that were identified at an early stage of the strategy, namely management of hand arm vibration risk and management of work-related stress and mental wellbeing, one Route and one Function agreed to develop local improvement plans related to these two issues. Whilst the development of local plans by these two business areas was a positive sign of early engagement with the strategic occupational health agenda, it was clear that there were a number of issues affecting the quality of the plans received:

- Because of the long latency period within which occupational health conditions develop and manifest themselves, a reliance on diagnosis rates to indicate effective hazard management meant that business areas were often falsely reassuring themselves that the hazard was being managed well;
- There was a lack of full appreciation of all areas of risk management for the identified hazards, meaning that some critical areas of control were overlooked or not considered; and
- Action plans for improving management of the hazard were lacking some important areas.

In addition it was felt that, with multiple business areas developing local improvement plans, there was a significant risk that each of the plans received would appear in very different formats and would lack a sense of uniformity. Based on the above, the OHWS team recognised that the local health and safety teams needed a much greater level of structured insight and guidance, which would allow better appreciation of the breadth of effective hazard management required (termed ‘maturity’) and effective actions they could take to achieve long-lasting and sustainable improvements in hazard management. However, the devolved nature of the organisation and the semi-autonomous nature of Routes and Functions meant

- the guidance could not be a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach, and
- business areas needed to be able to feel an ability to determine their own plans

A web-based maturity assessment tool was therefore developed allowing Routes and Functions to assess their performance relative to a specific hazard and, following completion of the maturity assessment (with specific questions determined by the central Strategy team), a series of high-level actions would be suggested to them for selection so that a structured local improvement plan could be developed. It was designed to be embedded within Network Rail's online health portal for easy access by local health and safety users and in a way that would allow the central OHWS team to continually add new hazard assessments and guidance actions as new issues emerged or at strategically agreed milestones.

**Health Improvement Planning System**

Welcome Chris Jones [Not you?](#) [Logout](#)

STED Unit

**HAVS** | **Mental Wellbeing**

**STED, STED Unit Mental Wellbeing**

Your current Mental Wellbeing average:

**54%**

Set your goals:

Use the "+" and "-" to set individual targets goals. Once finished click 'confirm'.

How do you compare:

**Vs NR Best**  
You 54% | Best 69%

**Vs NR Average**  
You 54% | Best 48%

**Your Plan - Mental Wellbeing**

Your recommendations:

- Mental Health**
  - Mental Wellbeing**
    - Develop and implement a local communication plan to promote mental wellbeing (e.g. mindfulness, achieving optimal mental wellbeing, five steps to mental wellbeing, building positive psychology)  [Search for plan](#)
    - Utilise educational resources such as presentations, videos and guides on the health and wellbeing portal to promote employee resilience  [Search for plan](#)
    - Deliver a programme of mental wellbeing promotion workshops (e.g. effective planning and coping, building resilience)  [Search for plan](#)
    - Promote uptake of the Network Rail Online Wellbeing Assessment as a tool to develop mental wellbeing  [Search for plan](#)
    - Locally identified control measure  [Search for plan](#)
  - Culture / Stigma** [View](#)
  - Line Manager Skills** [View](#)
  - Traumatic Incident Management** [View](#)
  - Lifestyle** [View](#)

**The Health Survey Tool - Mental Wellbeing** | **Build your Mental Wellbeing plan**

Dashboard showing hazard management maturity (left) and suggested improvement actions (right)

**Health Improvement Plan**

**Havs Maturity Assessment**

Scotland > Scotland Unit | Plan created on 11/06/2015

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**Health Improvement Plan**

**Mental Wellbeing**

Your current Mental Wellbeing average:

**46%**

Your goals:

Category	Best	Current score	Deadline
Mental Health	60%	60%	Aug 16
Mental Wellbeing	60%	60%	Aug 16
Culture / Stigma	46%	46%	Aug 16
Line Manager	30%	30%	Aug 16
Traumatic Incident	20%	20%	Aug 16
Lifestyle	20%	20%	Aug 16
Services and Interventions	50%	50%	Aug 16
Workplace Pressures	80%	80%	Aug 16

How do you compare:

**Vs NR best**  
Your score 46% | Best score 69%

**Vs NR ave.**  
Your score 46% | Best score 48%

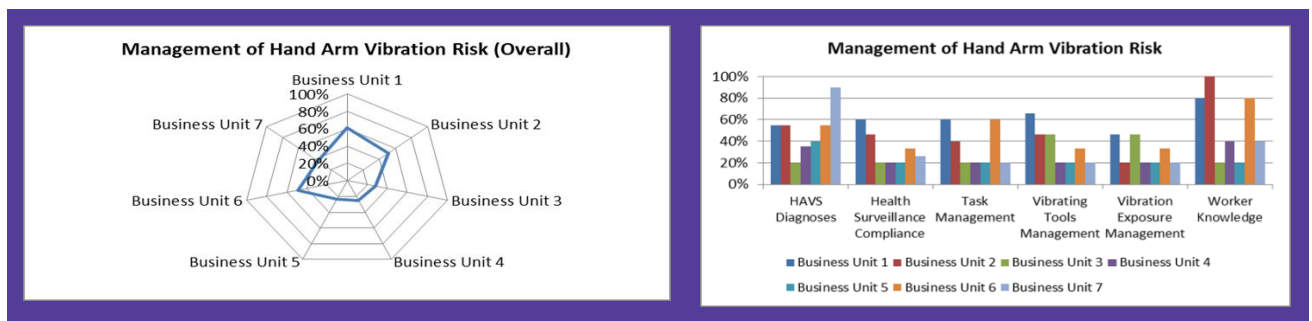
Page 1 | LNE > LNE Unit | Plan created on 10/06/2015

Pre-formatted improvement plan showing local performance

## Benefits of the Approach Taken

Utilising the assessment tool has led to several positive outcomes:

- Routes and Functions have reported positively that the system has provided them with a user friendly and helpful system for understanding all elements required to effectively manage health hazards and have found the pre-formatted reports have been well received locally, whilst still allowing them autonomy to decide on actions to take;
- Use of the system-based approach has enabled a consistent approach to measurement of hazard management and the formatting of reports; and
- The system has allowed for comprehensive reporting on business unit health hazard management and allowed identification of risk hot spots and trends by the OHWS team:



- To date (July 2015), all Routes have developed local improvement plans for management of hand arm vibration risk. In addition, all Routes, our Infrastructure Projects function and several central functions have developed local improvement plans for mental wellbeing
- Agreement has now been achieved with business units on developing local improvement plans for specific health hazards over the next five years

Network Rail Occupational Health and Wellbeing Strategy Team  
July 2015