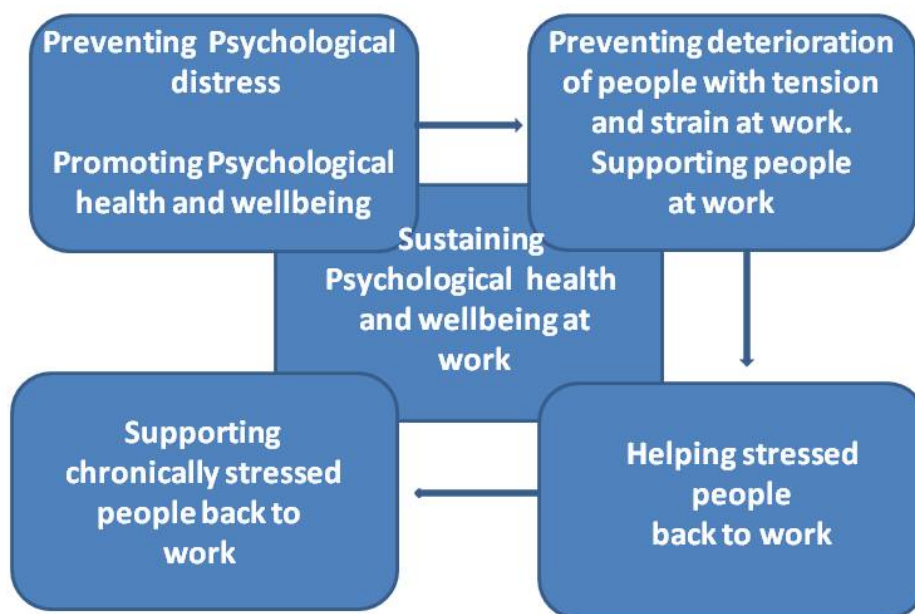


## Stress – strategy

All organisations need to establish a comprehensive strategy for the prevention and management of stress at work. Stress is often the most common cause of sickness absence, and is the most common reason for psychological presenteeism – the under –performance of staff due to their lack of concentration arising from events and experiences that diverts their attention.

The following framework provides a comprehensive structure for a strategy.



Each of the five strategic purposes are delivered by specific initiatives to achieve their purpose.

The OrganisationHealth Management Standards and the MAS Manager’s Code are both focused on the promotion of psychological health, wellbeing and performance at work, which is the antidote to stress, and, therefore, is the main lever to prevent stress from occurring in the first place.

Employee Assistance Programmes, Occupational Health Services and management training in the management of stress each contribute to the prevention of deterioration. The purpose is to stop anyone deteriorating further, once their stress is identified and made known.

Employee Assistance Programmes, Absence Management programmes, Occupational Health services, specialist psychological services, the NHS and private health services provide services to help people back to work. Other government initiatives are also in place for the same purpose.

Specialist rehabilitation services, Employee Assistance Programmes, Absence Management programmes, specialist psychological services, the NHS and private medical services may, also, provide services that help people with chronic stress to return to work. This requires specialist skills, as those off work for longer than 6 weeks, find it much harder, psychologically, to return to work.

Sustaining a positive working culture, the fifth strategy, requires constant reinforcement of the positive culture. This requires embedding reinforcement processes into daily working of lives. This is mainly achieved through high standard people management by managers.