

# 5 TOOLS

to get on top of work pressure



# PREFACE

Work pressure presents a challenge for many employees in the financial sector, affecting well-being and increasing the risk of developing stress.

It is crucial to take action as early as possible to reduce work pressure and to focus efforts where they will actually make a difference.

To assist managers, delegates and employees in this process, Finansforbundet has selected and adapted five simple tools for dialogue.

All tools may be applied both at the individual level and at the team level.

## High work pressure – what's it about?

High work pressure arises when, over a period of time, there is an imbalance between the amount of work to be done and the hours available to complete it. Personal circumstances may also play a role.

Typical signs of excessive work pressure [non-exhaustive]:

- Important tasks are not completed.
- Important deadlines are not met.
- Agreed service or quality levels are not met.
- Mistakes in work are made.
- Conflicts or collaborative problems arise.
- There is no time for breaks.
- Sickness absence is high.

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# TOOL 1

## The steps of stress – taking the pulse

The steps of stress are an effective tool for preparing to discuss work pressure with your manager, delegate or team.

You can use the steps of stress to assess your level of work pressure and understand the potential consequences it may have on both your work performance and your health.

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### How to proceed

#### Step 1:

##### The five steps of stress at a glance

Familiarise yourself with the five steps of stress, including the symptoms and signs of stress related to each of the five steps.

#### Step 2:

##### Your own steps of stress

In the work diagram, note down the symptoms and signs of work pressure and stress that you are experiencing right now. Be as specific as you can.

Based on the notes you have made about your work situation, consider where you are positioned on the steps of stress.

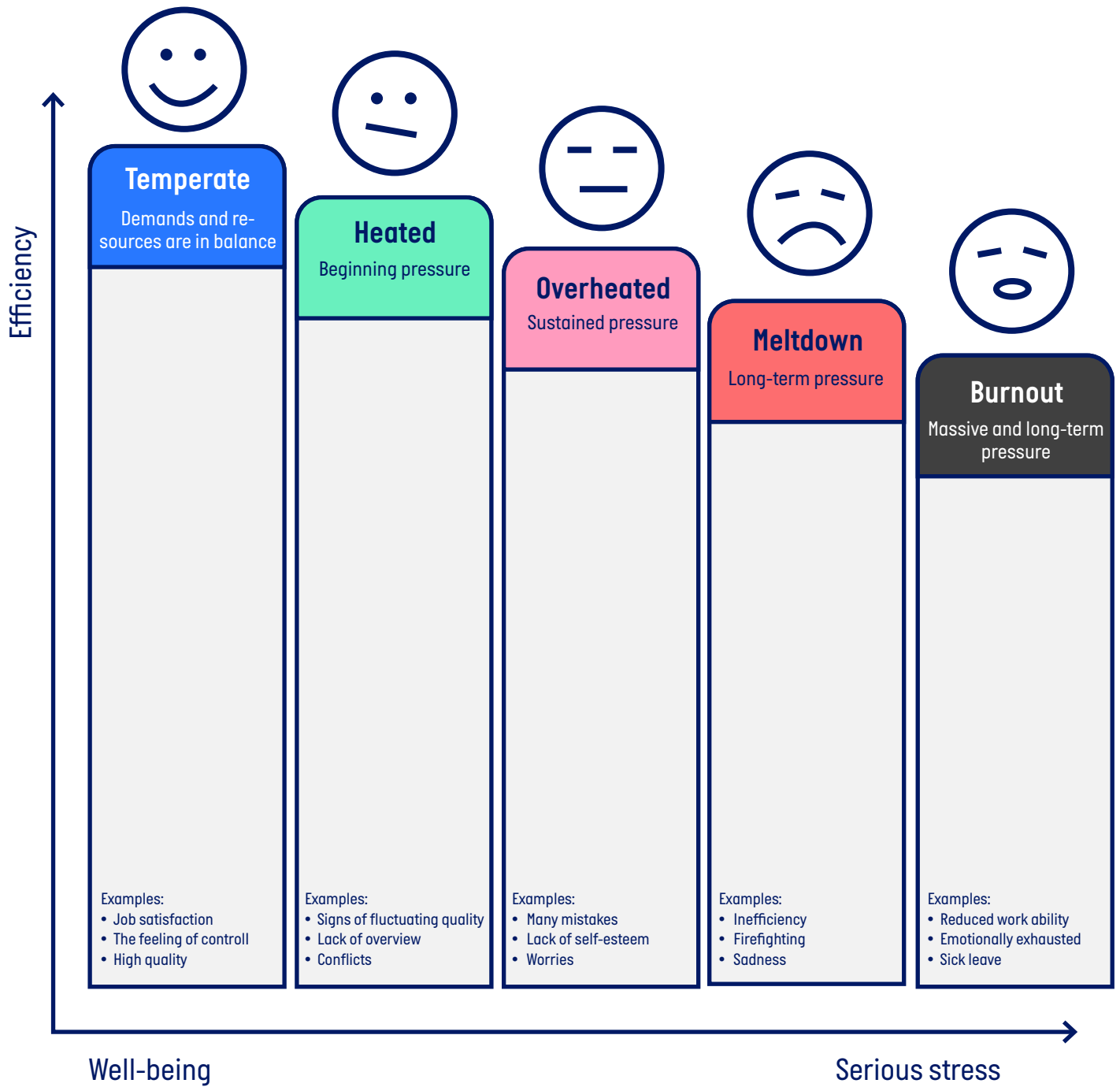
Make use of these considerations as you move along with one or more of the other tools in this brochure.

#### Step 3:

##### Use the steps of stress with others

Apart from serving as a great tool for individual clarification, the steps of stress are also helpful for facilitating dialogue with others. This can be particularly useful in appraisal interviews with your manager, team-based group discussions or within works councils or health and safety committees.

## Work diagram – the steps of stress



# TOOL 2

## The resource weighing scales – finding the balance

The resource weighing scales can help you gain an overview of the demands and challenges that are pressuring you in your work, while also identifying the resources that affect your work pressure.

By making these factors known, you can work with your manager or team to find concrete solutions to the challenges.

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### How to proceed

#### Step 1:

##### Signs of excessive work pressure

Write down on post-it notes how work pressure manifests itself in your everyday life. If possible, include also the resources you have at your disposal to ease the work pressure.

#### Step 2:

##### Demand or resource?

Place each post-it note on either the demands or resources side of the work diagram.

#### Step 3:

##### Balance or imbalance?

Then consider if the weighing scales are in balance. Do some demands need to be handled differently, or do some resources need to be strengthened?

#### Step 4:

##### Action plan

Finish by making a simple action plan to determine for instance:

- What needs to be done?
- Who needs to do it?
- Do the actions require the involvement of your manager, your team or others?
- When are actions needed?
- How will actions be followed up?

## Work diagram – the resource weighing scales



# TOOL 3

## Circles of influence – identifying things you can influence

The aim of the circles of influence is to outline the demands you can influence and the demands that are controlled or determined by others.

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### How to proceed

#### Step 1:

##### Signs of excessive work pressure

Write down on post-it notes how you experience work pressure in your daily routine. What are the signs?

#### Step 2:

##### Explore your sphere of influence

Place your post-it notes in the circles of influence corresponding to the things you control and influence and the things that are beyond your control.

Now focus on those demands you have control over and can influence. Which of these demands is most important for reducing your work pressure?

#### Step 3:

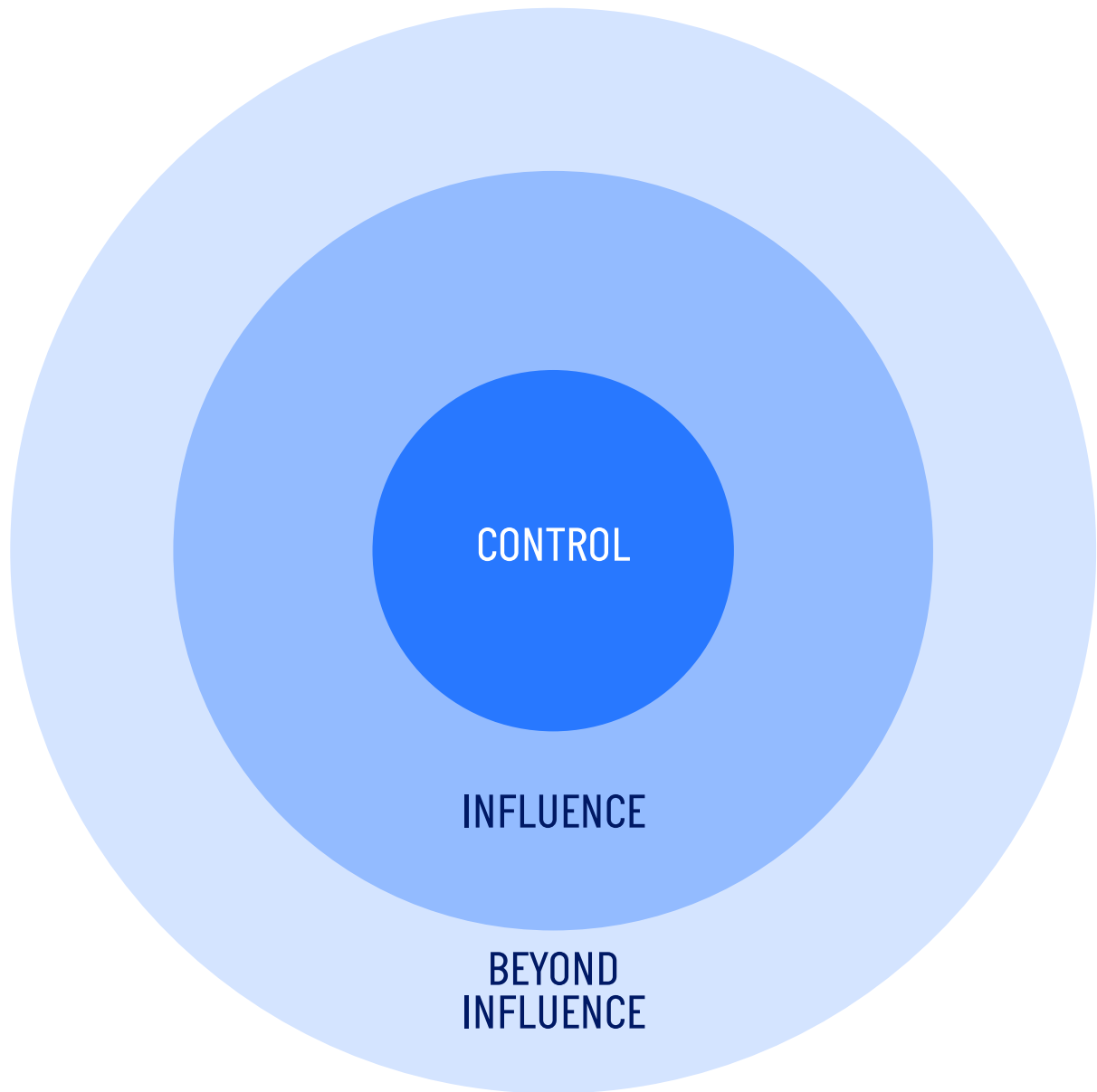
##### Action plan

Finish by making a simple action plan to determine for instance:

- What needs to be done?
- Who needs to do it?
- Do the actions require the involvement of your manager, your team or others?
- When must something be done?
- How will actions be followed up?



## Work diagram – the circles of influence



### **Control**

Your possibilities of changing the situation are good

### **Influence**

You are not in complete control, but can still influence the situation to a certain degree.

### **Beyond influence**

You have no control over the situation, but you may still consider how to make the best of the situation.

# TOOL 4

## The four-leaf clover – prioritising your tasks

The four-leaf clover is a useful tool to help you gain an overview of your tasks and learn how to prioritise them in a busy schedule.

It will also help you form a picture of the main task that you and your colleagues solve together.

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### How to proceed

#### Step 1:

##### Create an overview of your tasks

Create an overview of the tasks that are most critical to fulfilling your job role. Write them down on post-it notes.

#### Step 2:

##### Prioritise your tasks

Place the four-leaf clover on the table.

Review your job tasks and consider this:

1. What should I do more of?
2. What should I start doing?
3. What should I do less of?
4. What should I stop doing?

Place the post-it notes you wrote on the leaf that you think best applies.

#### Step 3:

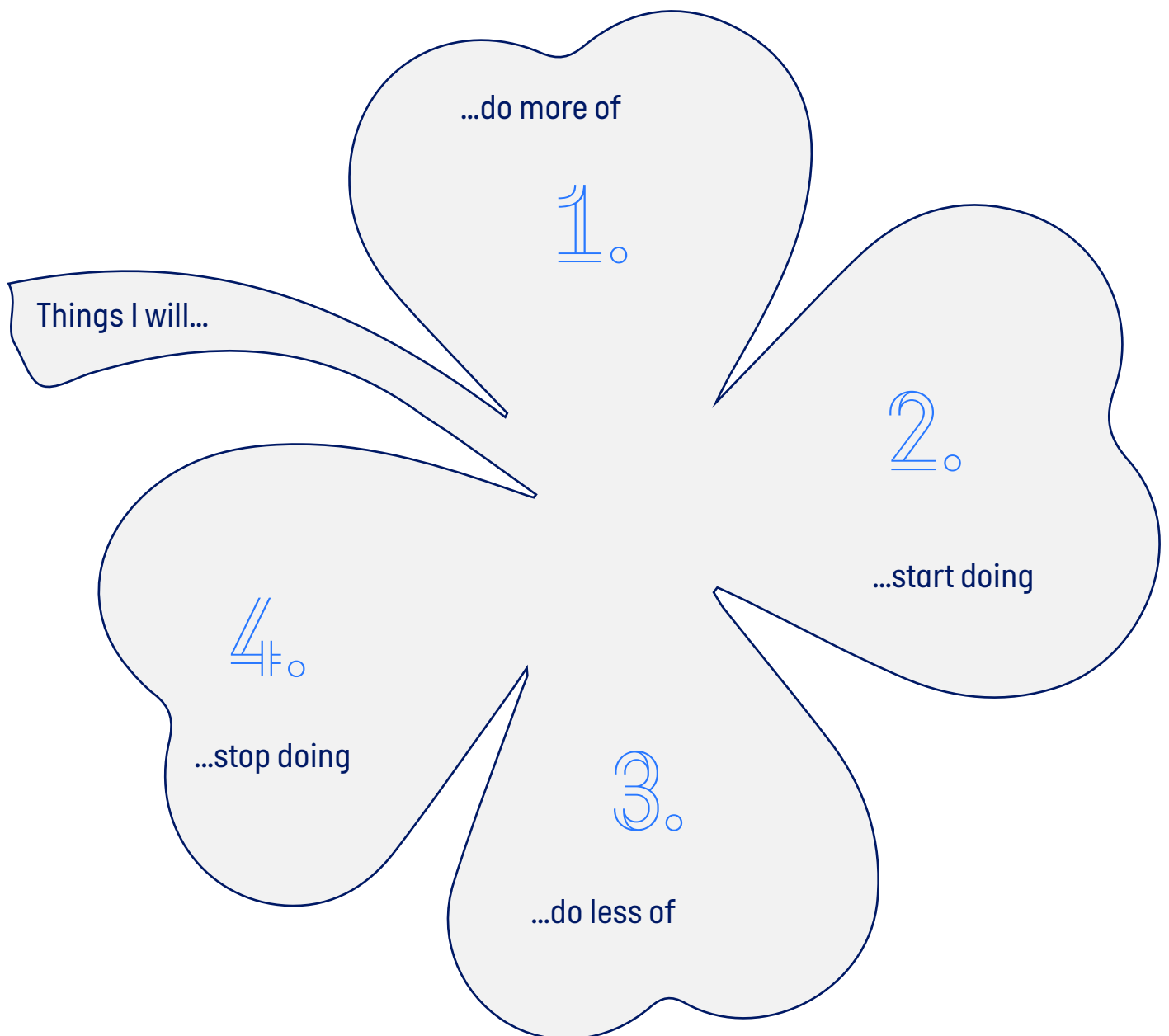
##### Action plan

You now have an idea of how to handle and prioritise your tasks.

Finish by making a simple action plan to determine for instance:

- What needs to be done?
- Who needs to do it?
- Do the actions require the involvement of your manager, your team or others?
- When are actions needed?
- How will actions be followed up?

## Work diagram – the four-leaf clover



# TOOL 5

## The task prioritisation map – taking the most impactful actions

The prioritisation map can help provide an overview of the most worthwhile actions to initiate in order to reduce work pressure.

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### How to proceed

#### Step 1:

##### Signs of excessive work pressure

Write down on post-it notes how work pressure manifests itself in your everyday life.

#### Step 2:

##### Overview and prioritisation

Select a maximum of three characteristics that you believe impact work pressure the most.

#### Step 3:

##### Ideas for action

Consider, for each of these three characteristics, the specific actions that could help reduce your work pressure.

Write down the actions on post-it notes.

#### Step 4:

##### Efficacy evaluation

Place your three proposed actions on the prioritisation map by answering the following two questions:

- How much of a positive impact do you believe this action will have on work pressure?
- How much effort will it take to initiate the action?

#### Step 5:

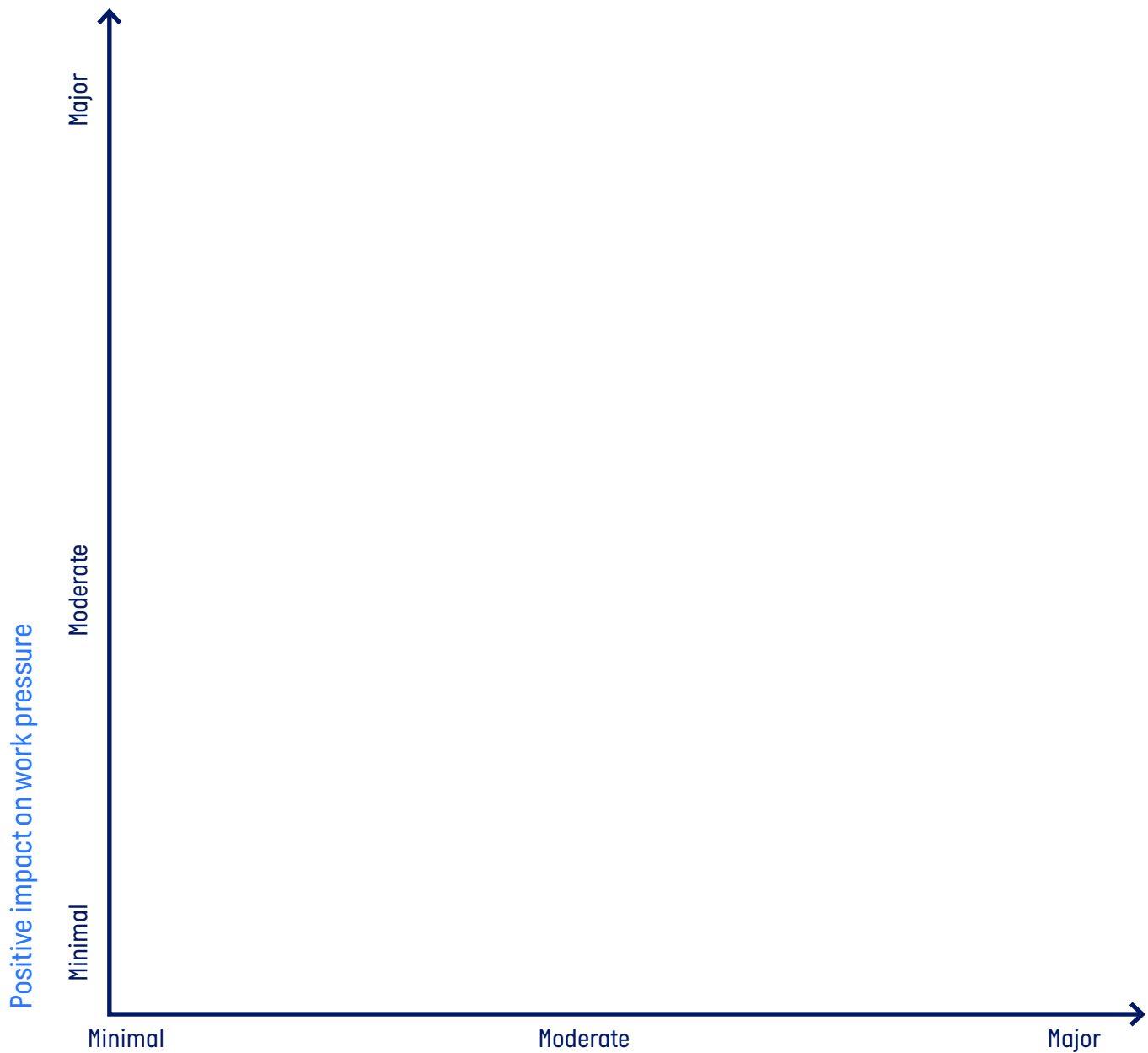
##### Action plan

Prioritise the action that you believe will most effectively reduce work pressure and is also realistic to implement.

Finish by making a simple action plan to determine for instance:

- What needs to be done?
- Who needs to do it?
- Do the actions require the involvement of your manager, your team or others?
- When are actions needed?
- How will actions be followed up?

## Work diagram – the prioritisation map



Efforts required to test the action  
[Time, resources, people involved, the scope of changed work procedures, etc.]

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# GET ON TOP OF WORK PRESSURE WITH WELL-BEING TOOLS

– a programme tailored to the  
financial sector

Are your employees experiencing high levels of work pressure on an everyday basis? Get the tools to open dialogue on the causes of work pressure and to find solutions together through the online programme *Get on top of work pressure* offered by BFA Finans.

The programme will help you prevent and handle work pressure at both team and organisational levels. It takes 1.5 hours to complete, but the duration may be adapted to your specific needs.

The programme is part of a bigger toolbox called *TrivselsTools [well-being tools]*, a toolbox designed to help the financial sector in their efforts to promote well-being and navigate the challenges in the world of work – from psychological safety to immersion and work pressure.

Explore the programme *Get on top of work pressure* here:



