



Managing workplace stress (advice and suggestions from the Health and Safety Executive)

The latest statistics from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) suggest mental ill health and work-related stress are on the increase.

In the last year, 595,000 workers across Great Britain reported experiencing work-related stress, anxiety or depression. The total number of working days lost due to this condition was 15.4 million days. Conservative estimates put the total loss to the British economy at over £5 billion per year.

Given the prevalence of the issue, have you ever taken a step back to consider what impact work-related stress may be having on your organisation? High sickness absence? High staff turnover? Low productivity? Low morale?

Preventing stress

Today, there is a growing industry of 'wellbeing strategies' which focus on training for managing resilience, mental health and mindfulness. Although such training can be effective and help people, it is often implemented after they've suffered from stress. It won't prevent others from becoming stressed, as it doesn't tackle the root cause. Preventing stress through proactive management is the most effective solution to deliver organisational benefits.

Where to start

HSE has identified the six key work factors that, if not managed properly, can lead to stress. They are demands, control, relationships, support, role and change. The easiest way to identify if your organisation has an issue with workplace stress is to ask your employees. Here are some practical tips to achieve this:

- For smaller organisations, talk to your staff - HSE have developed a 'Talking Toolkit' to help you frame these conversations (bit.ly/hsetalkingtoolkit)
- Raising awareness of stress and its causes is also important, and HSE have developed a series of posters you can use in your workplace (bit.ly/stressposters)
- For larger organisations, HSE has developed its Management Standards approach – using the Stress Indicator Tool.

What is the Stress Indicator Tool (SIT)?

SIT was developed by academics and industry experts at HSE to accurately measure and determine the attitudes and perceptions of employees towards work-related stress. It is available as an online assessment tool designed for organisations to gather data from employees, which can be used as part of the Management Standards approach.

Once completed, it produces an automated report to minimise time spent collating and inputting the results. The report then summarises the views and experiences of employees and provides recommendations for future improvements.

To find out more and to register for a free webinar demonstrating the stress indicator tool:

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