



Mental Health in the Workplace

Facts, Figures and Options for Employers

The recession has put workplace stress and mental health back at the top of the HR agenda. Uncertainty, threat of redundancy, recruitment freezes, cost cutting and redundancy survivor syndrome all increase stress levels for both managers and employees.

As the need for cost effective stress management grows, we have summarised some key figures and findings from recent research into stress at work:

Costs of Stress in the Workplace:

- ▼ Stress, anxiety and depression is now the single biggest cause of sickness absence in the UK
- ▼ 46% of employers have reported an increase in stress-related absence within the workplace
- ▼ The estimated cost of sickness absence to the British economy is around 12 billion pounds per year
- ▼ This equates to approximately 1600 pounds per employee

Legal Duties of Employers:

- ▼ 1 in 6 HR professionals consider work-related stress litigation to be the single most important law facing employers
- ▼ There is a very real danger that employers who do not fully understand the impact and effects of work-related stress leave themselves open to the threat of litigation and compensation claims
- ▼ Employers are legally obliged to look after the health and well-being of employees

Employers Awareness & Understanding:

- ▼ 8 out of 10 employers do not have a formal policy on stress and mental health in the workplace
- ▼ Of those that do, just 14% say it is effective
- ▼ 70% of employers said they did not know enough about laws on mental health in the workplace
- ▼ Line managers are the weakest link and are ill-equipped to deal with stress related problems
- ▼ Access to counselling is particularly desired by employees
- ▼ Employers have limited understanding of services they can offer at relatively low cost

Options for Employers:

- ▼ Internal stress management policies and corporate guidelines
- ▼ Risk assessments and stress audits - implementing HSE stress management standards
- ▼ Employee assistance programmes and counselling and advice helplines
- ▼ Return to work counselling following stress related sickness absence
- ▼ In-house stress management training for managers

Benefits of EAPs:

- ▼ An authoritative source of advice for line managers
- ▼ Better management of stress-related sickness absence
- ▼ Counselling & advice for staff facing redundancy
- ▼ Support for stressed employees taking on more work
- ▼ A tangible employee benefit that promotes staff wellbeing
- ▼ Mediation and a reduction in employment tribunals
- ▼ Effective litigation risk management for employers facing stress related claims