

Conference November 2013 – Workshops programme

We will be running two workshop sessions as usual although this year, we do not have the facility to repeat any sessions as before. Delegates are asked to select from the two groups of workshop topics their FIRST AND SECOND preferences for each session – you will be included in two workshops and we hope to give you the choices you make.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON 2.30 TO 4.30 P.M.		
	Subject	Facilitators
WS1	<p>Body Mapping and health issues</p> <p><i>Participative research for workers: body mapping and hazard mapping</i></p> <p><i>Participative research techniques are advocated by the ILO and trade unions as a diagnostic tool for safety reps. Use this workshop to develop a useful skill which you can use to identify key stressors and other hazards in the workplace - including the impact of the recession and "austerity" on workers.</i></p> <p><i>Using participative research can also help to strengthen trade union organisation in the workplace.</i></p>	Susan Murray, UNITE the Union
WS2	<p>Stress Risk Assessments in a climate of cuts and austerity</p> <p><i>Risk Assessments are a standard tool for employers to adopt and develop in order to ensure that all aspect of work are safe. Stress-specific risk assessments seem to have been rather ignored especially in the years since the beginning of the current recession, when the culture has been one of heads down and ignore any personal needs.</i></p> <p><i>The workshop will give a basic introduction and understanding of the stress response, identification of such as behavioural, physical and organisational symptoms in the workplace.</i></p> <p><i>It will include how to approach individuals and when to approach their employer with concerns. The session will include the use of a risk assessment matrix against several scenarios, the identification of stressors from the HSE management standards gold standard, monitoring and review of each process and use of policies and procedures – and most of all – the role of the representative in the whole process.</i></p>	Sean Duignan, UNISON and Stress Network
WS3	<p>Organisational dysfunction: Wildlife in the NHS</p> <p><i>Rachael and her research assistant Olivia will be sharing findings of a doctorate research study. Oli is very good at shattering myths and tracking down the wildlife that exists in the NHS.</i></p>	Rachael Pope, Researcher and Stress Network

	<p><i>Forty three interviews and six focus groups were conducted. A thematic analysis was undertaken. The findings provide some explanation as to why the NHS can behave in irrational, perverse and sometimes exceedingly damaging ways.</i></p> <p><i>In preparation for the discussions please think about the following research questions, but relate them to your own workplace.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What are the organisational responses to negative behaviour between staff?</i> • <i>What are the reasons and motivations for those responses?</i> <p><i>For the purposes of the research study negative behaviour is defined as: 'Any behaviour that is disrespectful and undermines/violates the value/dignity of an individual. It is behaviour that harms individuals and organisations' (Burnes and Pope 2007; Pope and Burnes 2009). It includes incivility, aggression, bullying, harassment or abuse.</i></p>	
<p>WS4</p>	<p>Stress solutions</p> <p><i>It is time to take a fresh look at stress in the workplace. We all know about the problems causing stress at work but we want to concentrate on the solutions to those problems. So it's never mind the past, don't get bogged down with the present but look to the future!</i></p> <p><i>Russ Walters and Geoff Smith, national trainers for the NASUWT, have developed a new one day course entitled 'Workplace Stress Solutions'. This workshop will give a broad outline of the course and preview their new animated film, highlighting the effects of stress not just on the individual but also on their families. The positive aspects of the course will be made apparent as they seek to involve their audience in dealing with this highly emotional topic.</i></p>	<p>Geoff Smith and Russ Walters, NASUWT</p>
<p>WS5</p>	<p>Tackling negative attitudes towards Mental Health and Wellbeing in the workplace</p> <p><i>Mental health problems cost employers in the UK £30 billion a year through lost production, recruitment and absence - so why aren't we doing more about it?</i></p> <p><i>The answer is straightforward. Despite the fact that it is very common - one in four of us will suffer mental health problems during our lives - we find it very difficult to talk about.</i></p> <p><i>It often seems too personal, too deep and too complex. You might feel very happy to tell a colleague about a physical injury you've sustained, but when it comes to your mental health, where do you start?</i></p> <p><i>The workshop will examine why the wellbeing and the mental health of workers is largely ignored, and will develop an awareness and response toolkit, including strategies to take forward for the future.</i></p>	<p>Ian Draper, Stress Network</p>

SUNDAY MORNING 09.45 TO 11.50 A.M.

<p>WS6</p>	<p>Occupational Health and Attendance Management</p> <p><i>The workshop session will examine a range of issues in the spheres of Absence Management and will produce advice for Stewards covering:-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Absence Management policies & ILL Health issues for branches</i> • <i>Discussion on tactics/strategy for Stewards dealing with this difficult issue</i> • <i>Case Study re Long term absence/ILL health retirement case</i> • <i>Couple of film clips – re effects of absence on members</i> 	<p>Scott Donohoe, Glasgow City UNISON and Stress Network</p>
<p>WS7</p>	<p>The stress of being a steward in a time of austerity</p> <p><i>Being a steward in these austere times can be very stressful - But what are you experiencing now, that is added or different from before?</i></p> <p><i>It seems that we are entering a new age of “post relational” industrial relations! The familiar evils of work pressure, lack of managerial support and bullying/ harassment have not simply increased, but are finding strong roots in new organisational cultures, where “lean and mean” and “resilience” are management mantras. The relentless spread of performance management, with “targets” and “indicators” linked to potential disciplinary measures against perceived “under-achievers”, takes place alongside a premise that workers who can be successfully taught “resilience” will be able to cope with any amount of stress. Add the lack of formal sanctions against managers who ignore the realities of stress, and we have a toxic climate in which to represent our members.</i></p> <p><i>What are the implications of this for yourselves, your members and the next generation of trade union activists?</i></p> <p><i>This workshop will explore the above issues, making much use of the experiences of participants. But, as always, we shall look to disperse some of the gloom by working together on some strategies for fighting back. So come along prepared to share your stories and ideas!</i></p>	<p>Bob Woods, Vaughan Skirrey, UNISON and Stress Network</p>
<p>WS8</p>	<p>The HSE Stress Management Standards in times of recession</p> <p><i>Government hostility and Government-inspired media hostility towards health & safety has created a climate of opinion that has allowed crippling cuts to the budget of HSE to be implemented without significant public protest. This and Government instructions to HSE to withdraw pre-emptive inspections and enforcement activity from large swathes of the public sector, industry and commerce has left workers exposed to the tender mercies of their employers.</i></p> <p><i>This workshop will ask what weapons are still left in the</i></p>	<p>Les Roberts, Stress Network</p>

	<i>employees' armoury and how these might be used to offer vital protection against work-related physical and mental injury.</i>	
WS9	<p>Raising Concerns in the workplace and achieving outcomes, including Whistle-blowing</p> <p><i>We live in a climate of negative attitudes towards complainants in the workplace. Workers are penalised and ill-treated if they raise their heads above the parapet. Recent high profile cases in care homes and the NHS have exposed the problems faced when trying to put matters right.</i></p> <p><i>Different words and phrases are used to describe raising concerns in the workplace, including 'whistle blowing' and 'silence breaking' (Zerubavel 2006, "The Elephant in the room: Silence and denial in everyday life"). The differences will be discussed. When highlighting problems Sean was probably 'whistle blowing' and Rachael was definitely 'silence breaking', but both were on the receiving end of some very negative behaviour in their respective organisations.</i></p> <p><i>We will be considering a range of experiences from more day to day raising concerns to the more high profile 'whistle blowing' cases e.g. Michael Woodford President of Olympus; Gary Walker in the NHS.</i></p> <p><i>The first part of this session will be very much group discussion and sharing of personal experiences.</i></p> <p><i>The second part will be looking at the more practical/policy issues around raising concerns. How do we raise concerns? How do we protect ourselves in that process?</i></p> <p><i>There are no magic and quick answers to these very difficult issues. Presently in this country raising concerns and highlighting wrong can be a very risky and exceedingly costly business. Many have lost their jobs and have suffered much detriment. Much needs to be done to change cultures in UK organisations so that they are responsive to negative feedback and are able to acknowledge errors. Organisations need to embrace a new identity of being a listening, learning and 'wise' organisation.</i></p>	Rachael Pope and Sean Duignan, Stress Network
WS10	<p>Performance Management [PM] issues in the workplace</p> <p><i>We work now in a culture which attempts to extract more and more from the workforce through downward pressures, targets, penalties, performance assessments and the application of aggressive management styles. Human Resource Management has become a platform upon which much store is placed and the effect on individuals is becoming more and more pronounced.</i></p> <p><i>More focus is made now on how well work is done and how performance targets will create an improved work-rate and output. The business case is becoming more important than the individual worker case.</i></p>	Ian Draper, Stress Network

	<p><i>Human resources are now no more than a work-tool to be manipulated just like machinery.</i></p> <p><i>The workshop will examine how PM procedures have developed in various workplaces; the positive and negative impacts of different application;, and the effects on individual workers and the workforce teams.</i></p> <p><i>The role of managers in ensuring positivity of application and outcomes will also be highlighted.</i></p>	
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