

Workplace Stress

Identify and Mitigate

Stress in the workplace is a complex issue, and a subject many businesses find difficult to manage. Cases of stress, depression and anxiety in 2018/9 represented 44% of all work-related ill health cases with the total number of working days lost amounting to 12.8 million.¹ With the business cost of mental ill health at work estimated at up to £45bn billion each year in sickness absence, reduced productivity and staff turnover² there is a compelling business case for addressing stress in the workplace as a risk management issue.

Stress is defined by the Health and Safety Executive as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed on them'. Stress in itself is not an illness, but where pressure exceeds a person's ability to cope and exposure is prolonged, this can lead to ill health. Employers have a statutory duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees whilst at work which includes minimising the risk of employees suffering a stress related illness.

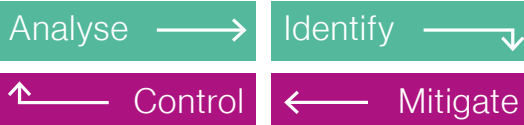
Effective psychosocial risk management requires active involvement at organisational level using a combined approach of preventative and management strategies in order to sustain employee wellbeing in the long term.

What we deliver

Willis Towers Watson has a team of experienced risk management consultants who will work with you to help you manage your risk of workplace stress. This may include a combination of the services below:

Wellbeing Insight Evaluation

We will carry out an analysis of your organisations current arrangements, responsibilities, policies and procedures for managing workplace stress and employee wellbeing. The process will involve discussion with key individuals within your business from HR, Health & Safety and Learning & Development. It will highlight strengths and weaknesses in your present arrangements and recommend solutions.



Training Solutions

Education plays a key role in mitigating the risk of workplace stress yet only 11% of managers in the UK have received training on understanding workplace stressors³. Our training solutions can be specifically designed to meet your organisation's requirements and can be delivered either face to face or virtually. Our courses have an emphasis on the prevention of workplace stress as well as management should issues arise.

Example subject matters include:

- What is 'Stress'?
- Individual/organisational impact of stress
- Legal obligations/claims
- Conducting risk assessments for stress
- Understanding primary causes of workplace stress
- Identifying stress in yourself and others
- Managing a stressed employee
- Line management competency
- Improving resilience

Who should attend?

Line Managers are often the gatekeepers to the presence or absence of stress in the workplace. Our training solutions are ideal for anyone with responsibilities for managing people, including senior managers and HR. Sessions are delivered via a mix of presentations, group discussion and activities.

¹ <https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/stress.pdf>

² <https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/press-releases/articles/poor-mental-health-costs-uk-employers-up-to-pound-45-billion-a-year.html>

³ <https://www.bitc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/bitc-wellbeing-report-mhamentalhealthworkfullreport2019-sept2019-2.pdf>

Consultancy Services

Our consultants can provide support and assistance with your internal workplace stress risk assessment to help you achieve regulatory compliance. This may include help with understanding your organisations stress hotspots, facilitating focus groups to obtain employee feedback and supporting you in devising your action plans.

Case Study

A manufacturing business approached Willis Towers Watson for assistance following a series of health & safety audits which revealed poor scores across several of its sites in managing workplace stress. Willis Towers Watson engaged with senior management and the health & safety committee and secured their commitment to deliver a program of training sessions to senior and front line managers across all sites.

Training sessions adopted a two pronged approach designed to get attendees involved in understanding stress in the individual and their own responses, as well as how stress manifests within an organisation based on the HSE's Management Standards approach to workplace stress. Each session concluded with a group exercise to consider how workplace stress may arise from current working practices and generate solutions to encourage a healthier working environment.

With an understanding of what causes stress within the workplace, managers were able to take this knowledge back in to the workplace to embed the HSE Management Standards within their everyday role, as well as having an increased awareness of their own stress responses and management techniques.

What are the benefits?

Actively managing workplace stress will help your organisation to:

- Demonstrate compliance with regulatory requirements to assess the risk of harm to your workforce;
- Identify gaps or improvements in policies and procedures relating to workplace stress and recommend solutions;
- Identify, reduce or eliminate stressors at source;
- Educate managers to identify signs of stress in employees and manage issues at an early stage before they escalate to illness and lost time;
- Help employees to understand their own response to stress;
- Develop a culture that is supportive of those with stress related health problems;
- Demonstrate to insurers you are pro-actively addressing workplace stress which may lead to reduced insurance premiums;
- Protect your organisation from employers' liability and tribunal claims;
- Reduce staff turnover, reduce absence and increase productivity.

For further information please contact:

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