

World Mental Health Day: Supporting staff must be a priority for employers

- Workplace regulator HSE offers free advice for employers to help protect mental health
- 17 million working days are lost due to stress, anxiety, or depression every year in Great Britain
- Tackling this could bring economic benefits
- Reminder comes on World Mental Health Day (Monday October 10)

Good mental health in the workplace must be a priority for employers.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) believes supporting staff wellbeing is not only the right thing for bosses to do but could also benefit Britain's economy.

The workplace regulator is reminding employers of the importance of mental health support on International Mental Health Day (Monday October 10).

HSE offers free advice for employers on supporting their staff's mental health through its Working Minds campaign, which is aimed at addressing the impact of work-related stress.

Around 17 million working days are lost due to stress, anxiety, or depression every year in Great Britain. Stress is thought to be responsible for almost half of working days lost. Research by HSE found of the people suffering from a work-related illness in Britain, 822,000 were reporting signs of work-related stress, depression, or anxiety.

Reducing this will not only help people lead happier lives but could also have significant economic benefits at a time when attention is focused on growing the economy.

HSE says a supportive working environment can improve productivity and performance, and workers are more likely to stay with an employer that prioritises good mental health. A report found evidence that UK bosses will receive an average return of £5 for every £1 spent on mental health.

Events are taking place today (Monday October 10) to mark International Mental Health Day; a global event organised by the World Health Organisation to protect and improve mental health across the world.

HSE's Working Minds campaign aims to help businesses recognise the signs of work-related stress and make tackling issues routine. The campaign was launched after research showed mental health issues are the number one reason given for sick days in Great Britain.

Employers have a responsibility to assess and act on the risks in the workplace, not just in terms of physical safety but also mental health.

Sarah Albon, chief executive of HSE, said: “World Mental Health Day is a good opportunity for employers to check they have the right support in place for their staff when it comes to mental health. Taking action to improve workplace mental health not only benefits individuals, but also supports business growth and productivity. Employers should have an open environment where staff can share concerns and discuss options to ease pressures they face.”

[A recent survey from Deloitte](#) suggests one in six workers experience a mental health problem at any one time and that the total annual cost of poor mental health to employers has increased by 25% since 2019, costing UK employers up to £56 billion a year. Deloitte’s findings also suggest that UK bosses will receive an average return of £5 for every £1 spent on mental health.

Guidance on how businesses can spot the signs of work-related stress and prevent issues before they become a problem can be found through HSE’s Working Minds campaign:

<https://workright.campaign.gov.uk/campaigns/working-minds/>

Notes to editors

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain’s national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise. [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk)
2. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
3. The Working Minds campaign is supported by Mind, Lifelines Scotland, NHS, ACAS, Mates in Mind, the Farm Safety Foundation, the Royal College of Psychiatrists, the Plastics and Composites Group, the Department for Work and Pensions, the Civil Engineering Contractors Association, the Federation of Small Businesses, CONIAC and the UK Home Care Association.
4. Information about World Mental Health Day can be found here: [World Mental Health Day 2022 \(who.int\)](#)