Beat It – Workplace Stress

Food and Drink Industries Group
July 9th 2019

Julie Routledge and Julie Wassell
Agenda

• 09.00 Registration and refreshments
• 09.30 Welcome and introduction to the day – Pamela Brown
• 09.45 So what is stress? An in-depth discussion
• 10.15 Developing a stress policy – the how and why
• 10.30 Practical session – stress policy ‘must-haves’
• 11.30 Comfort break
• 11.45 HSE Management Standards – an introduction
• 12.30 Lunch and networking
• 13.30 Practical session – Stress Risk Assessment
• 14.30 Let’s talk
• 15.30 Close
Learning Objectives

At the end of this workshop, delegates should be able to:

• Understand the size and impact that work related stress could have on an organisation

• Explain what stress is, how it affects an individual and what controls can be put in place to reduce as much as is reasonably practicable.

• Demonstrate and explain the basic contents of a Work Related stress Policy

• Understand the HSE Stress Standards and carry out a Stress Risk Assessment
Why should we tackle Work Related Stress?

• Moral
  • Company reputation
  • Great place to work

• Legal
  • Duty of care to protect vulnerable individuals
  • Risk Assessment
  • Litigation/claim

• Business Case
  • Improved productivity
  • Improved staff performance and morale
  • Staff retention
  • Healthy workforce = lower sickness absence
Why bother about Stress?

• Stress-related absence has increased over the last year in nearly two-fifths of organisations. Just 8% report it has decreased. Heavy workloads remain the most common cause of workplace stress, but this year an increased proportion blame management style.

Work-related stress – Health and Wellbeing at Work (CIPD & Simply Health annual Survey 2019)
Why bother about Stress/Mental Health

Mental Ill health and Stress combined accounts for 43% of long term sickness absence

Health and Wellbeing at Work (CIPD & Simply Health Annual Survey 2019)
What is Stress?

Workload demands is the largest cause of work related stress reported in the Health and Wellbeing at Work Survey 2019.

Health and Wellbeing at Work Survey 2019
HSE – Costs to Britain 2016/17

Ill Health costs £15bn per annum of that £9.7bn is caused from Ill health

The burden to Employers is £3bn (20%)
Stress, depression or anxiety in Great Britain

595,000
Workers suffering from work-related stress, depression or anxiety (new or long-standing) in 2017/18
Labour Force Survey (LFS)

15.4 million
Working days lost due to work-related stress, depression or anxiety in 2017/18
Labour Force Survey (LFS)

Stress, depression or anxiety by cause, averaged 2009/10-2011/12

- Workload: 44%
- Changes at work: 8%
- Violence, threats or bullying: 13%
- Lack of support: 14%
- Other: 21%

Source: Labour Force Survey
Stress, depression or anxiety per 100,000 workers: new and long-standing

The rate of self-reported work-related stress, depression or anxiety was broadly flat but has shown signs of increasing in recent years.

Source: Labour Force Survey
Is stress a mental health problem?

Being under pressure is a normal part of life. It can help us take action, feel more energised and get results. But if we often become overwhelmed by stress, these feelings could start to be a problem for us.

Stress isn't a psychiatric diagnosis, but it's closely linked to our mental health in two important ways:

• **Stress can cause mental health problems**, and make existing problems worse. For example, if you often struggle to manage feelings of stress, you might develop a mental health problem like anxiety or depression.

• **Mental health problems can cause stress**. You might find coping with the day-to-day symptoms of your mental health problem, as well as potentially needing to manage medication, health care appointments or treatments can become extra sources of stress.
What is Stress

We all know what it's like to feel stressed, but it's not easy to pin down exactly what stress means. When we say things like "this is stressful" or "I'm stressed", we might be talking about:

• **Situations or events that put pressure on us** – for example, times where we have lots to do and think about, or don't have much control over what happens.

• **Our reaction to being placed under pressure** – the feelings we get when we have demands placed on us that we find difficult to cope with.

Mind accessed May 2019
What happens to our body when we are stressed

External event seen as a threat by individual

Body returns to normal

Flight/Fight response activated

- Heart rate increased
- Breathing increased
- Fats and Glucose released for energy
- Blood flow diverted from non-essential body areas to muscles and brain
- Perspiration increased
- Immune system suppressed

Adrenaline, noradrenaline and cortisol released

Threat Removed

Acetylcholine released

Adrenaline, noradrenaline and cortisol levels lower
## What are the signs of Stress

### Physical feelings
- Irritable, aggressive, impatient or wound up
- Over-burdened
- Anxious, nervous or afraid
- Like your thoughts are racing and you can't switch off
- Unable to enjoy yourself
- Depressed
- Uninterested in life
- Like you've lost your sense of humour
- A sense of dread
- Worried about your health
- Neglected or lonely

### Physical Symptoms
- Shallow breathing or hyperventilating
- You might have a panic attack
- Muscle tension
- Blurred eyesight or sore eyes
- Problems getting to sleep, staying asleep or having nightmares
- Sexual problems, such as losing interest in sex or being unable to enjoy sex
- Tired all the time
- Grinding your teeth or clenching your jaw
- Headaches
- Chest pains
- High blood pressure
- Indigestion or heartburn
- Constipation or diarrhoea
- Feeling sick, dizzy or fainting
What are the signs of Stress

Behaviour

- finding it hard to make decisions
- constantly worrying
- avoiding situations that are troubling you
- snapping at people
- biting your nails
- picking at your skin
- unable to concentrate
- eating too much or too little
- smoking or drinking alcohol more than usual
- restless, like you can't sit still
- being tearful or crying.
Work Related Stress

• Yerkes-Dodson Arousal Curve – produced in 1908

• Optimum is to have your work balance in a range where you are motivated, challenged, under pressure but able to deliver results with no detriment to your health.
Developing a Stress Policy

• Why have a Stress Policy?
  • Legal
  • Moral
  • Economical
Breakout Group – Stress Policy Must Have’s

• In your groups please consider what you would expect to have or see in a Stress Policy and nominate a team member to communicate back
Comfort Break
HSE – Stress Standards

Figure 1: The Management Standards approach

1. Identify the stress risk factors: Understand the Management Standards
2. Decide who might be harmed and how: Gather data
3. Evaluate the risks: Explore problems and develop solutions
4. Record your findings: Develop and implement action plans
5. Monitor and review: Monitor and review action plans and assess effectiveness

Prepare the organisation
Health and Safety Executive – Stress Standards

• Demands
• Control
• Relationships
• Change Management
• Role
• Support
Lunch
Stress Risk Assessment

In your groups we want you to look at the scenario provided and to think about:

• what the potential stress hazards could be
• Identify who may be harmed
• What control measures are you already providing
• Any further actions required to control the risk
• Who would be responsible for completion
• Feed this back to everyone
### What are the hazards?
- Demands:
  - Accountants, particularly around tight deadlines and end of financial year.
  - Support staff, at the same time of year.
  - Sales staff, at the end of each quarter and at the end of the financial year.
  - All staff, at times of new legislation.
  - All staff, dealing with difficult clients.
- Control:
  - All staff, in economic downturns.
  - Junior grades, who have less control.
- Support:
  - All staff.

### Who might be harmed and how?
- Demands: Accountants, particularly around tight deadlines and end of financial year. Support staff, at the same time of year. Sales staff, at the end of each quarter and at the end of the financial year. All staff, at times of new legislation. All staff, dealing with difficult clients.
- Control: All staff, in economic downturns. Junior grades, who have less control.
- Support: All staff.

### What are you already doing?
- Demands:
  - Understanding what work-related stress is and what can cause it.
  - Responding to a pattern of increased absence due to work-related stress.
  - Checking fit notes, and talking to employees.
  - Looking for signs of stress in employees.
  - Talking to employees.
- Control:
  - Talking to staff about how they feel about their work.
  - Giving staff own areas of responsibility.
- Support:
  - Training managers in spotting early signs of stress.
  - Providing details of counselling services for staff.
  - Staff can talk to supervisors or managers if they are feeling stressed at work.
  - Staff are supported on return to work after a period off with work-related stress.

### What further action is necessary?
- Demands:
  - Meeting with staff and clients to agree timings etc for projects.
  - Monitoring workloads.
  - Planning work to minimise excessive demands.
  - Taking on extra resource to support end of year work.
  - Taking to employees regularly to gather information, directly or via line managers.
  - Employees being encouraged to talk to line managers about upcoming leave etc and potential difficulties with workload.
  - People may not identify time off sick as stress so thinking about whether:
    - there is an area/job that has high amounts of absence.
    - employees complain about working in a particular area or doing a particular job.
- Control:
  - Staff survey.
  - Anonymous ‘vox box’ for comments.
  - Using the results of surveys and your risk assessment with employees – asking what they think can be done and feeding back on these issues and ideas.
- Support:
  - Training managers in how to support staff suffering from work-related stress.
  - Having a clear commitment to employee wellbeing and a culture of openness.
  - Reminding staff they can speak confidentially to managers or supervisors if they are feeling stressed at work.
## Stress Risk Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are the hazards?</th>
<th>Who might be harmed and how?</th>
<th>What are you already doing?</th>
<th>What further action is necessary?</th>
<th>Action by who?</th>
<th>Action by when?</th>
<th>Done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>All staff</td>
<td>Training managers in promoting a positive working culture</td>
<td>■ Introducing a zero tolerance approach to bullying.  ■ Sometimes line managers may be part of the problem so having a range of routes for feedback can be really helpful.</td>
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<td>Role</td>
<td>All staff</td>
<td>Defining all team roles</td>
<td>■ Thinking about whether any staff are particularly vulnerable, eg those working alone, young workers.  ■ Investigating whether there are roles where it is difficult to recruit or retain staff.</td>
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<td>Change</td>
<td>All staff, but junior grades are more likely to be affected by management decisions. Additional pressures can arise through adapting to changes in staffing, etc.</td>
<td>Making sure changes are communicated openly so everyone understands the effects they will have  ■ Monitoring effects of changes on stress levels so staff have the chance to provide feedback</td>
<td>■ Meeting clients to explain changes and manage expectations  ■ Acting on staff feedback to any new pressures linked to changes are discussed</td>
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Top 5 Tips on how to complete a stress risk assessment

• Ensure you have Senior Management commitment.
• Ensure you have a champion or champions at or near the top of the organisation.
• Ensure you have an effective communications strategy.
• Provide training for managers on managing stress risks.
• Understand where to get information and help with a stress risk assessment
Interventions to consider

- Fruity Friday
- Line Manager Selection – Caring and concern for employees
- Social support groups
- Policies and processes to manage bullying and harassment
- Good work environments – chill out areas, lighting etc
- Team Building events
- Appraisals

- Employee surveys
- Mentoring and coaching
- Employee open talking forums
- Role descriptions
- Goals/objectives
- Development
- Anonymous reporting/whistleblowing line
Longer Term Considerations

• Resilience training for employees & Managers
• Stress awareness training
• Time management training
• Mental Health first aid
• Coaching and mentoring
Let's Talk
Thank you for listening, any Questions?
Sources of Information

• Health and Wellbeing Survey

• Health and Safety Executive – Stress
  http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/

• Mind – Stress
  https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/stress/#.XO1BvMntyM8