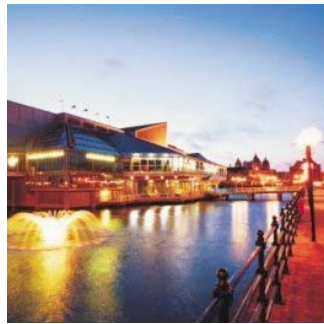


Mental Health in the Workplace

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Stress in the workplace - some facts

- In a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) report on work related stress, 20% of respondents suffered from stress at levels described as 'very' or 'extremely stressful';
- It has been estimated that workplace stress is one of the biggest occupational health problems in the UK;
- The most common stress related complaints presented to GPs are depression and anxiety and are reported to affect 20% of the UK working population;
- 10% (estimation) of the UK's gross national product (GNP) is lost each year due to job generated stress;
- In 2003/4 an estimated 12.8 million working days were lost in Britain as a result of stress. Overall 91 million working days each year are lost as a result of mental health problems;
- 3 in 10 employees will have a mental health problem in any one year - mainly anxiety and depressive disorders;
- It is expected that those with mental health problems are at more than double the risk of losing their job than the general population, thus resulting in loss of valuable skills and increase in recruitment and training costs for employers;
- Reasonable adjustments for staff with mental health needs are low cost, reduce sickness absence and maintain staff morale;
- Fewer than 40% of employers would consider employing a person with a mental health problem, whereas 93% of the general public believe that they would contribute something to the economy;
- 64% of young people commented that they would be embarrassed to tell a prospective employer that they had a mental health problem;

Relevant Legislation

Disability Discrimination Act 1995;

http://www.drc-gb.org/PDF/dda_1995.pdf

Disability Discrimination Act 2005;

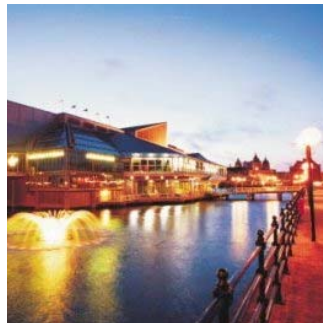
http://www.drc-gb.org/PDF/dda_2005.pdf

Health & Safety at Work Act 1974

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/legislation/hswa.pdf>

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Stress Prevention & Management

It is recommended that all organisations should have a stress prevention policy. This would highlight how stress issues should be dealt with. Policies should include:

- Why the policy is important
- Why the business needs a policy
- Who is responsible for what
- A definition of stress
- An indicator of what the business strategy is for dealing with stress, for example the general activities the business will be undertaking as a matter of course.

[Source: Mind - for better mental health]

Stress Intervention - 3 Levels when dealing with workplace stress

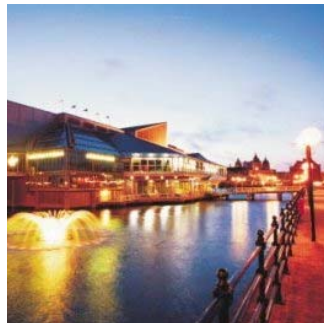
Primary - eliminating/modifying environmental stressors to reduce their negative impact on individuals. For example, job redesign, culture change, flexible working or work life balance policies;

Secondary - focuses on increased awareness, resilience and coping skills of the individual. For example, stress management training, health promotion activities and skills training more generally (without trying to eliminate or modify the stressors)

Tertiary - treatment and rehabilitation of distressed individuals. For example, counselling or return to work policies.

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Key Messages to Employers

- Demonstrate and encourage awareness, understanding and openness with regards to stress and mental health in the workplace;
- Adopt and adhere to formal policies on stress and mental health in the workplace;
- Allow employees to make reasonable adjustments;
- Offer resources or procedures to help manage stress at work and generally improve mental wellbeing.
- **Reasonable adjustments** can include flexible working, passing various tasks on to other members of staff for either the short, medium or long term, allowing other colleagues to help and allowing time for breaks.
- **Help while in work** includes offering a counselling service, mentoring, review meetings and if an employee is taking time off request them to keep you updated on their progress regularly.

Key Contacts & Useful Websites

To order a free Employers Support Pack on mental health and employment issues or to register for workshops on workplace mental health issues then please contact:

Evelyn Krasner, Hull Teaching Primary Care Trust
T: 01482 344808 E: evelyn.krasner@hullpct.nhs.uk

Information on the Employers Support Pack on Mental Health and the Workshops above can be found at:
<http://www.hullbusinessforum.com/Userimages/Employer%20Support%20Pack.pdf>

Greg Harman, Manager of Step Up, Hull & East Yorkshire MIND
T: 01482 886098 E: stepup@mindhey-beverley.co.uk

The workplace health connect website targets businesses with less than 250 employees and can provide direct telephone advice

W: www.hse.gov.uk/workplacehealth

ACAS

W: <http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=301>

Directgov - Mental Health

W: <http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/HealthAndSupport/MentalHealth/index.htm>