

Health and Safety Bulletin

Working Minds

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During November the HSE launched their Working Minds campaign, with the aim of changing how small businesses view and respond to work related stress, by encouraging them to approach this issue in the same way that they would a physical health risk such as noise.

How significant is the problem?

Evidence from the Labour Force Survey suggests that the average prevalence of work-related stress, depression or anxiety across all industries was 1,570 cases per 100,000 workers over the period 2017/18-2019/20. In 2019/20, however, it increased to 2440 per 100,000 workers – accounting for 51% of all work-related ill-health and 55% of all workdays lost due to ill-health.

The HSE has investigated whether the COVID-19 pandemic has led to the significant rate increase in the past year and concluded that it may have contributed, but it is not the main driver.

Practical action

There are a variety of actions that companies and individual employees can take to tackle this risk, such as

- Carry out a work-related stress risk assessment, assessing the systems and procedures in place for managing the six key areas identified by the HSE as increasing the risk of work-related mental health problems – demands, control, support, relationships, role and change. It's important that it is updated to reflect any changes within the organisation, such as reallocation of responsibilities or increases/decreases in workforce numbers
- Implement simple steps to improve the management of work-related mental health following the HSE's 5"R's"
 - Reach out – start a conversation to check how people are feeling and coping
 - Recognise – if people are struggling, encourage them to talk about it
 - Respond – when there are work-related issues that are adding to any mental health issues, consider what action can be taken to eliminate or reduce them
 - Reflect – try and identify whether there were circumstances during 2021 that affected your and other employees stress levels – are there things you could do better next year?
 - Make it Routine – what changes can you make that are sustainable and are going to make a difference – avoid treating it like a tick box issue
- Monitor measures that may indicate there is a problem in a team, such as increases in staff turnover or sickness absence
- Provide suitable training to managers and supervisors – this could involve use of the stress talking toolkit available at [Talking Toolkit: Preventing work-related stress \(hse.gov.uk\)](http://Talking Toolkit: Preventing work-related stress (hse.gov.uk))

Conclusion

As part of the Working Minds campaign the HSE is asking for volunteers to sign up to become a champion at [Working Minds - Champions - Work Right to keep Britain safe \(campaign.gov.uk\)](http://Working Minds - Champions - Work Right to keep Britain safe (campaign.gov.uk)) – to help them raise the profile of the campaign and increase engagement.

The management of work-related ill-health is about creating the right working environment in which the risk of someone suffering work-related mental health is minimized, but one in which if it does occur, it can be recognised quickly and action taken to reduce the seriousness of any long-term consequences.

Recently issued health and safety information:

- HSE lone working video [Lone workers: how employers should protect them - Overview - HSE](#)
- HSE video about ventilation in vehicles related to COVID-19 [Ventilation in vehicles \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)
- BOHS simple ventilation tool for workplaces with reference to COVID-19 [Ventilation Tool – Breathe Freely](#)
- No falls foundation working at height pocket card [What to watch when working at height \(nofallsfoundation.org\)](#)
- Stretching guide for DSE users [Free Stretch Guide - Osmond Ergonomics](#)
- Video on healthy use of laptops at home [Healthy use of laptops at Home - YouTube](#)
- Ergonomics for kids – free e-learning [www.ergonomics4kids.co.uk](#)

Health and safety statistics

The HSE has recently issued the 2020/21 statistics – with the following headline measures:-

- 1.7 million working people suffering from work-related ill health, with
 - 822,000 workers suffering work-related stress, depression or anxiety
 - 470,000 workers suffering from a work-related musculoskeletal disorders
 - 93,000 workers suffering from COVID-19 which they believe may have been due to coronavirus exposure at work
- 645,000 workers suffering from a work-related illness caused or made worse by the effect of the pandemic
- 142 workers killed at work
- 102,000 over seven day lost time work-related accidents were recorded through the Labour Force Survey, compared to the 51,211 non-fatal injuries reported under RIDDOR

Case Law update

This issue focuses on cases where organisations have been prosecuted for failing to report accidents or ill-health under RIDDOR

Perrys Motor Sales Ltd (PMS) and Occupational Health & Safety Consultants, S & Ash Ltd (previously known as Sound Advice Safety and Health Ltd.), were both sentenced in 2020 after an employee, who regularly used handheld power tools to undertake small scale vehicle body work repairs, was diagnosed with HAVS. PMS had failed to adequately assess and control the foreseeable risk and following the diagnosis, took no action to protect the employee from further damage to his

health. Also, his condition was not reported to the authorities in line with legal requirements. S & Ash Ltd was engaged by PMS to provide HAVS health surveillance for employees but they failed to provide suitable and accurate advice to PMS or to inform the employee of the results of his health surveillance, even when he specifically requested it. PMS were fined **£140,000** with **£7,658** costs and S & Ash Ltd **£4,000** with **£8,716** costs

A builder has been **imprisoned for 24 weeks** and ordered to pay costs of **£2,033** after he failed to report a serious incident at a construction site he was in charge of. A worker had been clearing a site with an

excavator when the excavator tipped while digging and trapped his leg, resulting in an amputation

A north west roofing supplies firm and its director were fined after two workers fell from a tower scaffold being used to install signage. The scaffold was not erected by someone with suitable training and had no outriggers. It moved away from the building causing workers to fall 2m, fracturing their legs and ankles. The company was fined **£20,000** and the Director was given **100 hours community service** and ordered to pay **£1,000** costs

About Clwyd Associates...

We are a management consultancy, focusing on health and safety, and SAP based in the Midlands.

In business since 2000, we employ consultants with at least 15 years practical experience backed up by recognized professional and academic qualifications - ensuring our clients receive first class service.

Clwyd Associates Ltd
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Help the HSE!

The HSE are looking for volunteer organisations to take part in a study to understand the risk of COVID-19 transmission through interactions at work. Workers at participating organisations will be asked to volunteer to wear proximity devices to generate contact data – the HSE are particularly interested in food and drinks manufacturers, warehouses, general manufacturing sites and large offices. If you are interested, you can find out more at [display.aspx \(manchester.ac.uk\)](#).



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