

## **Peninsula Business Services, Releases Guidance on How to Reduce Stress in the Workplace**

*Peter Done, managing director of Peninsula Business Services, releases guidance for employers on how to reduce stress in the workplace.*

October 28, 2011 (FPRC) -- Peter Done of Peninsula Business Services, said today, 'In the UK it was estimated that 10 million working days were lost as a result of anxiety, depression and stress, which employees linked directly to work and working conditions.'

The duty to ensure an employees Health and Safety at work is secured has a long history within the UK legal system and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASAW) is the main piece of legislation which covers this issue. This act states 'It shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all his employees'. There is also a legal obligation for an organisation to need a written statement of general policy with respect to Health and Safety at work of his employees.

In accordance with the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999 there is a duty to undertake risk assessments and introduce appropriate measures to reduce risk of Health and Safety issues.

In addition to the above mentioned legislation, a European Social Partners' Framework on work related stress was also agreed in 2004. The aim of this agreement was to increase the awareness and understanding of employers, workers and their representatives of work related stress, and to draw their attention to signs that could indicate problems of work related stress. The framework agreements objective was to provide employers and workers with a framework to identify and prevent or manage problems of work related stress. There are however doubts regarding the effectiveness of such European frameworks due their non-binding nature.

The framework agreement gives a non-exhaustive list of potential stress indicators, including high absence from work, high staff turnover, frequent interpersonal conflicts or complaints by workers. The agreement details that a number of factors should be analysed during the identification of stress.

These include:

work organisation, including working time arrangements, degree of autonomy, the match between a worker's skills and the requirements of their job, and workload;

working conditions and environment, including exposure to abusive behavior, noise, heat and dangerous substances;

communication issues, such as whether there is uncertainty about what is expected from someone at work, a worker's employment prospects, or details of forthcoming changes;

and

subjective factors, such as emotional and social pressures, feelings of being unable to cope and perceived lack of support.

Once work-related stress has been identified the framework agreement outlines that the employer must take action to prevent, eliminate or reduce it, with the participation and collaboration of workers and/or their representatives.

In response to the European Social Partners Framework on work related stress 2004 the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) implemented management standards/guidelines to address concerns of work related stress. The standards help to simplify risk assessments for stress and encourage both employers and employees to work together to address work related stress.

The management standards cover six areas of work, which if not correctly managed can have an adverse impact on all employees' wellbeing and health, they are stressors which if managed correctly can avoid work related stress having a detrimental impact on the employment relationship.

The six areas are:

- Demands - examples of which are workload, working environment and work patterns.
- Control - which relates to whether feedback from staff impacts on working systems in place for each affected employee, specifically how they complete their duties.
- Support - examples of which include encouragement, sponsorship provided by a company, line management and its employees.
- Relationships - which relates to avoiding conflict in the workplace and addressing unreasonable behaviour through disciplinary process whether that is formal or informal.
- Role - specifically whether employees understand their role within an organisation.
- Change - How change is communicated within a company.

There are five steps to follow when trying to achieve the management standards and they offer a good measurement for management practice, they are:

- Identify the risk factors
- Highlight who can be harmed and how
- Evaluate the risks
- Record your findings
- Monitor and review

Additionally, the main recommendations to prevent stress are:

- Establish effective method of reporting stress at work
- Introduce additional stress related questions within return to work guidance documentation for managers
- Carry out regular assessment of the work-load levels within your company
- Regularly monitor stress related absence to identify any areas of the business at most risk.

For further clarification on stress management issues then call Peninsula Business Services, on 0161 827 8511 or visit <http://www.peninsula-uk.com>

### **Contact Information**

For more information contact Sammual James McLoughlin of Peninsula Business Services

(<http://www.peninsula-uk.com>)  
0161 827 8511

**Keywords**

[Employment Law HR Red Tape](#)  
[stress](#)  
[Peninsula](#)

You can read this press release online [here](#)