



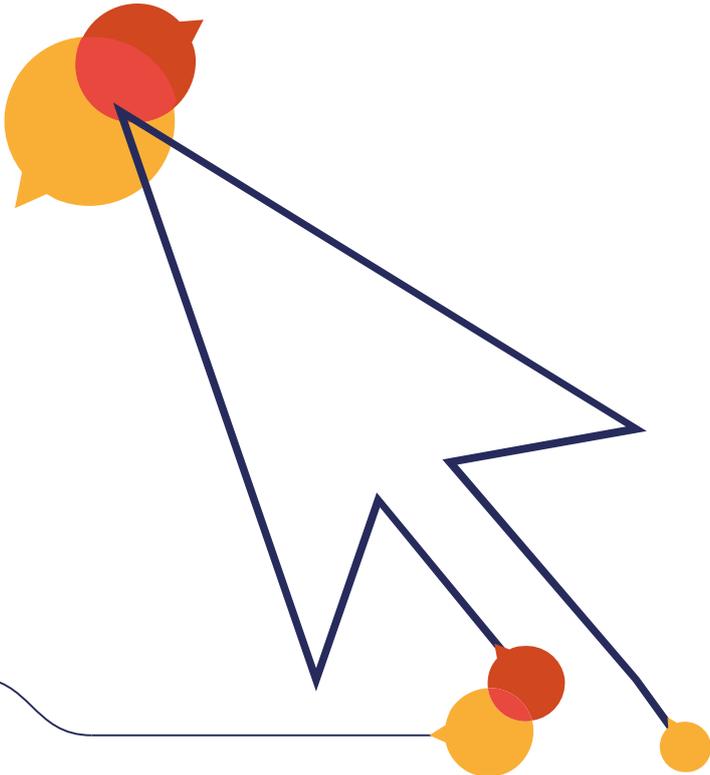
accidents don't have to happen

National Occupational Safety & Health Committee



RoSPA 'position' on Mental Health at Work

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RoSPA 'position' on Mental Health at Work

RoSPA encourages employers to adopt a holistic approach to managing the risks to the health, safety and wellbeing of their staff.

Poor mental health among many members of the UK's workforce is a major problem, particularly relatively high and persistent rates of stress, anxiety and depression which may be caused or made worse by workplace factors such as work performance pressures, poor job design and workplace conditions; poor management, including lack of support, and other factors such as threats and bullying. Together with pain from work related musculo-skeletal disorders (which in turn can exacerbate stress – and be exacerbated by it), work-related stress is one of the biggest occupational challenges currently facing UKL PLC.

In the context of safety and accident prevention too RoSPA also believes that poor mental health can also adversely affect safety performance, particularly in job roles in high hazard contexts that require close concentration and the exercise of good judgment.

Since 2009 and our involvement in the development and delivery of the 'Health Risks at Work: Do You Know Yours' toolkit, RoSPA has worked in partnership with other organisations to raise the profile of employees' mental health and negate the impact of poor work/life balance, bullying and harassment, work related stress and wider issues of mental health in the workplace.

RoSPA recognise that 'good work is good for people and good for business' but that, employers need to identify and manage significant [risks to the wellbeing](#) of their staff. It is this type of concise, pragmatic guidance on basic good practice that will help managers from micro to multi-national businesses begin to address these issues.

All employers have a legal duty to ensure that they are not damaging employees' mental health and they also need to ensure that they have the policies, skills and processes in place to help staff with mental health problems. Suitable training for both senior and line managers is fundamentally important in this context.

RoSPA has strongly supported uptake and adoption of the HSE's Management Standards for Work Related Stress (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards>) which require employers to carry out an assessment of potential stressors and stress levels in their businesses - but it is not convinced that this fundamentally important tool has been adequately promoted by HSE and other health agencies, including by providing training about the Standards for key staff and decision makers.

While many forms of help and assistance are now available for those suffering from mental health issues in the workplace, the understanding of the fundamental importance of mental ill health prevention is still not sufficiently understood, including by health professionals in the NHS, particularly in primary care.

[Evidence](#) shows that:

- employees in good health can be up to 3 times more productive than those in poor health;
- employees in good health experience fewer motivational problems;
- employees in good health are more likely to be engaged with their employer's priorities and that
- employees in good health are more likely to embrace change.



RoSPA 'position' on Mental Health at Work

RoSPA would like to see a renewed campaign to embed coverage of the HSE Stress Management standards in the training and continuing professional development of all managers, workers' representatives and health and safety health professionals.

RoSPA would also like to see HSE, in appropriate cases, using their powers to require businesses to with significant unaddressed stress problems to introduce mental health change programmes under the supervision of outside experts.

RoSPA believes there is a need to improve the level of access which employees have to suitable occupational health services and support. While this is well developed in many businesses, many workers, particularly those in many SMEs, still do not have access to a suitably trained or empowered occupational health professional.

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