

Dear

Stress at Work

Work-related stress can have a devastating impact on employees and seriously impinge on the work they do.

Unite is launching a year long campaign to help organisations in the Not for Profit Sector, and its employees develop an action plan to reverse the growing prevalence of stress at work. From a recent survey carried out by Unite, 92% of respondents cited that as a direct result of the impact of funding alone, that they experienced work-related stress or ill health. This has caused Unite to take action.

We know that organisations are being placed under a range of pressures resulting from demands for services, challenging client groups, reductions in funding and difficult procurement processes.

Short term funding has also produced job insecurity which brings its own pressure to bear on individuals. With the call for "more for less" from policy formers being driven forward, we can only expect the climate to get worse, if action is not taken urgently.

Unite understands the pressure placed on organisations, and that staff and management are frequently on the same side of the argument in wanting to ensure that the procurement and other funding processes and other work-related factors do not impinge on the employee or the valuable work that they do.

With organisations also having a legal duty to take reasonably practicable steps to address stress at work under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974), and more recent case law, has emphasised this.

But beyond the legal obligations, there is a clear business case for ensuring that your organisation enacts a positive workplace strategy around tackling work-related stress, these include reduced turnover, better outcomes and a far more motivated workforce.

Across the UK economy, £24bn and 370m working days are lost through conflict related stress alone. These are avoidable costs.

This is why Unite is running a positive campaign, where we want to work alongside management to ensure that work-related stress is managed effectively and which results in new or refreshed action plans in every workplace.

Throughout this campaign, we will be asking our members and representatives to be involved in identifying the depth of the problem in their workplace through a survey, and then working with you to find appropriate solutions.

We will also be encouraging them to raise awareness amongst colleagues, since this in itself can have a huge impact on helping staff make early diagnosis of the pressures placed on them and how to deal with this.

We will be holding training for our representatives and activists to equip them with knowledge and information to assist with this work, and will also be holding a free one-day national conference on 4 November, 2010 in London for representatives, activists and managers of their respective organisations, with leading experts in the field to talk about best practice and assist in developing workplace plans.

Unite very much hopes that your organisation will fully participate in this work.

Yours sincerely