

Dear Colleague,

The Unite Disabled Members' Committee is working with our colleagues in the Health and Safety department and Mental Health Nurses Association to campaign against work place stress and to prevent work place discrimination for people who have a mental health condition. Unite is also campaigning against the cuts in the Health Service that support people with mental health conditions.

As a workplace representative you may be asked by our members to represent them on employment issues relating to mental health conditions. This campaign pack provides you with useful resources to deal with these employment issues. We also provide you with information from Mind, who can provide support to people in relation to their mental health conditions.

It is important to explain to members that our role as Unite work place representatives is to provide representation on issues relating to employment. It is essential that you do not provide counselling or health advice to members as a work place representative and use the information provided to ensure our members can access health advice and support where necessary.

Stress at work is increasingly becoming the major cause of occupational ill health and mental health conditions. 20 per cent of people have a mental health condition during their lifetimes.

- Cuts to public services are having a serious impact on work place stress.
- Every year UK businesses lose £26 billion and 70 million working days because of conditions like workplace stress.
- Work place stress is preventable; it is a serious health and safety concern that can lead to mental health illness.
- Unite will not tolerate its members who suffer mental health conditions being discriminated against on the grounds of disability.
- Unite is fully opposed to cuts in mental health services.
- Mental health jobs are vital roles in maintaining and improving the health of the nation.

Whilst some employees end up being ill, or having to leave, or take time off, many others continue to work under increasing levels of stress, but can also testify the impact that this has had on their personal health, their family, the quality of their work, their organisation, and their morale.

The tragedy is that this is avoidable. If management undertook risk assessments of the situation and enacted an action plan, as is their duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974), then work related stress would not be as prevalent.

Even if these issues are yet to hit your work place, having risk assessments, policies and processes in place to address these issues are of utmost importance.

Unite is campaigning to help you transform the place where you work. We will ensure that you are equipped to make a difference there.

Please let us know about your campaign successes or if you would like further information related to the issues.

Yours sincerely

Siobhan Endean

National Officer – Unite the Union

