

Press Release

Monday 25th January 2021

Leading Expert on Workplace Wellbeing Becomes New Patron of ISMA^{UK}

The International Stress Management Association (ISMA^{UK}) is delighted to announce that Professor Sir Cary Cooper CBE, a world-leading expert on workplace wellbeing, has become a new Patron of ISMA^{UK}, the lead professional body for workplace and personal stress management, wellbeing and performance.

Professor Cooper is the 50th Anniversary Professor of Organizational Psychology and Health at Manchester Business School and, as an expert on occupational health and workplace wellbeing, has written or edited over 250 books on these subjects.

Carole Spiers, Chair, ISMA^{UK} said, 'We are proud and honoured that Professor Cooper has accepted our invitation to become a Patron. Sir Cary's huge experience and understanding of wellbeing at work will be of immense benefit to ISMA as we face the challenges ahead, accelerated by the pandemic. His thoughts on investing in the workplace environment could not be more relevant and timely, and we look forward to working with him over the coming months'.

In his presentation to the ISMA^{UK} Global Stress and Wellbeing Summit in November last year, Professor Cooper spoke about the need to enhance productivity and wellbeing and achieve work-life integration in the post-Covid world. He commented, 'Pre-Covid, 57% were reported as suffering from stress, depression or anxiety, with accompanying increases in workplace sickness or absence, but now, with looming concerns about job security and work overload or underload, these symptoms are likely to multiply. In the UK, stress is the number one cause of staff absence with over 12 million days lost each year. The more stressed and anxious we are, the less productive we become'.

Professor Cooper continued, 'Covid has given us a good opportunity to reset the button and reboot. If ever there was a need for wellbeing, it is now. Yet 63% of organisations do not yet have a wellbeing strategy. The words "people are our best resource" need to be rooted in action, not just rhetoric. We need to be smart in our approach to management. We need managers with emotional intelligence (not just technical expertise), who can manage people remotely, who can team-build in dispersed work environments and manage job insecurities. If we do this, productivity will improve, sickness levels will reduce, and wellbeing will increase. If we don't manage this, we will not be competitive in the future'.

Notes for Editors

- Professor Cooper is the 50th Anniversary Professor of Organizational Psychology and Health at Manchester Business School, University of Manchester. He is a founding President of the British Academy of Management, President of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), former President of RELATE and President of the Institute of Welfare. He has been an advisor to the World Health Organisation, ILO, and EU in the field of

occupational health and wellbeing and chairs the National Forum for Health & Wellbeing at Work. He was awarded the CBE in 2001 for his contributions to occupational health; in 2014 he was awarded a Knighthood for his contribution to the social sciences.

- For press interviews with Professor Cooper, please contact Carole Spiers FISMA, FPSA, MIHPE, Chair, ISMA^{UK} on 07768 878910 or email her at chair@isma.org.uk.
- ISMA^{UK}'s Global Stress & Wellbeing Summit will be held on 3rd-4th November 2021, as the centrepiece of International Stress Awareness Week, 1st-5th November. International Stress Awareness Week was created in 2018 to celebrate the 20th anniversary of National Stress Awareness Day, established in 1998.
- For more information about ISMA^{UK}, visit www.isma.org.uk. As a registered charity and membership-based organisation for over 30 years, ISMA^{UK} exists to promote sound knowledge and best practice in stress management, both nationally and internationally, providing advice to a wide range of individuals, businesses and voluntary organisations, while supporting the Health & Safety Executive in delivering their requirements for Stress Risk Assessment.