

Press Release

20th March 2023

Professor Sir Cary Cooper Looks at the Future of Workplace Wellbeing

Professor Sir Cary Cooper, the highly respected expert on workplace wellbeing, will be talking about how we should be looking at managing stress and workplace wellbeing in the post-Covid world at an online Masterclass being hosted by the International Stress Management Association (ISMA^{UK}) on Thursday 30th March.

Professor Cooper, 50th Anniversary Professor of Organisational Psychology & Health at the Alliance Manchester Business School, will emphasize the need for action as levels of work-related stress continue to increase - the current rate of self-reported work-related stress, depression or anxiety is higher than the 2018/19 pre-coronavirus levels¹.

Although longer-term trends suggest that employee wellbeing is gradually rising up the corporate agenda, with nearly one in ten respondents expecting their organisation's health and wellbeing budget to increase significantly over the next 12 months², workplace stress remains a silent and often-neglected factor that impacts adversely on employee health and productivity. This state of affairs also reduces company performance and success rates.

Amongst the issues Professor Cooper will discuss are – how we can build on progress made to date and what our focus should be in 2023; the accountability of boards for implementing measures to reduce stress (such as ensuring a non-executive director is responsible for employee health and wellbeing, holding the organisation accountable for stress-related and mental ill health); implementing bespoke strategies such as mental health first aid; and the role trained professionals, such as HR managers, counsellors and coaches, should play in getting organisations to develop effective interventions.

Professor Cooper commented, "Workplace stress is preventable. If we really want to prevent workplace stress and treat wellbeing as a desirable goal for organisations, there are straightforward steps we can take that will make a measurable difference: organisations should understand the purpose of wellbeing and why it must be valued, seeing it as part of the wider company culture; they should ensure there is a strategy to extend their approach to wellbeing; and they should avoid being over-ambitious, proceeding carefully while taking advantage of professional advice."

Carole Spiers, Chair of ISMA^{UK}, added, "We are delighted to have Professor Cooper as our speaker for this Masterclass devoted to plotting the future of stress management and workplace wellbeing. These are key areas for ISMA^{UK} as the lead professional body for workplace and personal stress management, wellbeing and performance: Professor

Cooper's arguments align with our theme for 2023, *Beyond Stress Management: From Stigma to Solutions*. It is vital that employers adopt proactive measures aimed at tackling stress and develop strategies geared to increasing workplace wellbeing. By going the extra mile, we can create healthier, safer and more productive workplace environments."

ENDS

¹ Health & Safety Executive report, *Work-related stress, anxiety or depression statistics in Great Britain 2022*

² Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) Report [Health & Wellbeing at Work 2022](#)

Notes for Editors

The Future of Stress Management and Workplace Wellbeing

For more information on ISMA^{UK}'s online Masterclass, being held on Thursday 30th March, go to <https://isma.org.uk/monthly-masterclass-events>. Places may be booked in advance at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-future-of-stress-management-and-workplace-wellbeing-in-conversation-tickets-535988384687> and are free to ISMA^{UK} members. Non-members are asked to pay £10 per event.

Professor Cary Cooper CBE is 50th Anniversary Professor of Organisational Psychology and Health, Manchester Business School, University of Manchester, a founding President of the British Academy of Management, Immediate Past President of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), and President of the Institute of Welfare. He has been an advisor on occupational health and wellbeing to the World Health Organisation and is Chair of the National Forum for Health & Wellbeing at Work. He is the author/editor of over 250 books on occupational health psychology, workplace wellbeing, women at work, and occupational stress.

About ISMA^{UK}

ISMA^{UK} is the leading professional body for workplace and personal stress management, wellbeing and performance, promoting sound knowledge and best practice in stress management, resilience, wellbeing and mental health for over 30 years. ISMA^{UK} practitioners and consultants provide stress management services, including flexible training courses and coaching to individuals and businesses in both the private and public sectors, assisting around 40,000 people who need professional help with stress-related issues every year. ISMA^{UK} endorses and uses the HSE guidelines for managing stress in the workplace. To find out more about ISMA^{UK}, visit www.isma.org.uk.

Press Interviews

For all press and media enquiries please contact Carole Spiers, Chair of ISMA^{UK}, for an immediate response on +44 (0) 77 688 78910 or at chair@isma.org.uk.