

Press Release

20th January 2023

What Can We Do to Reduce Rising Levels of Workplace Stress in 2023?

This is one of the questions to be debated by experts on stress and wellbeing at an Online Masterclass, *Beyond Stress Management: From Stigma to Solutions*, being hosted by the International Stress Management Association (ISMA^{UK}) on Thursday 26th January. Other questions will include “How can we encourage employees to speak up about stress and mental ill health?”, “What advice can be given to support line managers, who appear to be under pressure too?”, and “What impact has hybrid working had on stress?”

In the Health & Safety Executive’s report, *Work-related stress, anxiety or depression statistics in Great Britain 2022*, levels of work-related stress are shown as continuing to increase – of 1.8 million workers suffering from a work-related illness in 2021/22, 914,000 cases were related to stress, depression or anxiety. Seventeen million working days were lost due to these causes. The current rate of self-reported work-related stress, depression or anxiety is higher than the 2018/19 pre-coronavirus levels¹.

On the plus side, a Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) Report [Health & Wellbeing at Work 2022](#) states that around half of respondents believe they are effective in tackling workplace stress (52%) while 51% of organisations take a strategic approach to employee wellbeing. 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 months.

However, Carole Spiers, Chair of ISMA^{UK}, says, “A great deal remains to be done. Short-term pressure at work is often unavoidable, and it can be perceived as ‘healthy’ by some. However too much pressure equates to stress, which is not good, and it should be addressed before it affects an employee’s health and performance”. According to the CIPD, excessive workload is the most common cause of work-related stress, but other factors affecting it include lack of job security, workplace changes, lack of development opportunities and poor communication.

Professor Sir Cary Cooper CBE, 50th Professor of Organizational Psychology & Health at the Alliance Manchester Business School, University of Manchester, is one of the panellists at the ISMA^{UK} Masterclass. He says, “If we really want to prevent workplace stress and treat organisational wellbeing as a strategic issue, we need to have a non-executive director responsible for employee health and wellbeing on every company board in the private sector and the public sector. They should oversee the metrics (such as stress-related

sickness absence, employee turnover, employee satisfaction) that hold the board and the organisation accountable for stress-related and mental ill health.”

The other Masterclass panellists will be Françoise Woolley, Head of Mental Health & Wellbeing at Acas, Peter Kelly, Head of Psychological Health and Safety UK at FlourishDx, and Charlotte Turnbull, Head of Wellbeing & Sustainability at W Legal, who will moderate the discussion.

Carole Spiers, Chair of ISMA^{UK}, added, “We are very proud to be hosting this Masterclass devoted to reducing the stigma attached to stress and finding solutions that support workplace wellbeing and minimise risks to mental health. These are key areas for ISMA^{UK} as the lead professional body for workplace and personal stress management, wellbeing and performance”.

¹Labour Force Survey quoted in *Work-related stress, anxiety or depression statistics in Great Britain, 2022* <https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/stress.pdf>

Notes for Editors

Beyond Stress Management: From Stigma to Solutions

For more information on ISMA^{UK}'s online Masterclass, *Beyond Stress Management: From Stigma to Solutions*, being held on Thursday 26th January, go to <https://isma.org.uk/monthly-masterclass-events>. Places may be booked in advance here <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-role-of-coaching-in-workplace-wellbeing-tickets-390128724517>. Masterclasses are free to ISMA^{UK} members. Non-members are asked to pay £10 per Masterclass.

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.