The Voice of the Networks

ENA Occupational Health Committee – Case Study

TITLE **Mental health and stress**

**These case studies are designed to outline the overall management of stress programmes within ENA member companies, and so identify different approaches to the management of this issue and examples of good practice.**

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| **Company Name:** |
| **Company Initiative:**  Providing comprehensive training and awareness around mental health and stress. |
| **What did the Company do:**  SSE is committed to identifying and tackling the causes of work-related stress through education, stress awareness training programmes, referrals and a confidential employee advisory resource. The company has comprehensive corporate standards and procedures to cover mental health, health and wellbeing and healthy working lives.  The company offers an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) to support employees, their family, partners, and those close to them, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The EAP provides confidential and readily accessible counselling support for both personal and work related issues, regardless of how complex or minor they are, over the telephone or in a face-to-face setting where appropriate. In addition to the EAP, individuals can also be referred to the company’s occupational health  provider for professional support.  The corporate health awareness calendar raises awareness amongst all 20,000 employees of health and wellbeing themes across the year, and local sites are encouraged to take part and benefit from the awareness events. Mental Health and Stress is a core theme with focus at 3 different points throughout the year.  The company has recently surveyed large sites on health and stress at work via the HWL programme and deveolped local action plans to support these outcomes.  SSE carries out annual Safety, Health and Environment conferences across the UK in major venues, and has utilised these to cover resilience and stress awareness workshops.  We run internal mental health training for managers which consist of a one day comprehensive course to raise awareness of stress symptoms and how to talk about mental health. This is supported by NHS Scotland and Healthy Working Lives.    All managers receive Engaging Managers training which is a corporate Blueprint initiative highlightng the values to follow and behaviours to exhibit as managers. In addition the company carries out a regular ‘Great Place to Work’ survey on all employees which highlights anonomously if there are any problems in local areas such as workload, stress or workplace bullying.  A bespoke internal eLearning module has been developed with our Learning and Development team to produce a short, sharp eLearning package aimed to equip all staff with basic skills around mental health. The focus is around recognising mental health, reasonable adjustments, employee support and discussing mental health. The user is guided through an interactive set of scenario based slides which include work related situations to help them engage with the content and take away key learning points.    ***Our 2017 Health and Wellbeing calendar*** |
| **Health and safety benefits:**   * Awareness around mental health and stress to all employees * Support mechanisms in place both from managers and via confidential counselling * Reducing the stigma of mental health and showing employees they have support * Providing tools and techniques to employees to reduce their own stress levels * Providing ability to recognise signs and symptons and take preventative actions * Overall motivation and morale of employees |
| **Business / Cost Benefits:**   * Reducing absence levels and long term sickness * Managers equipped with the right skills to deal with mental health and stress * Correct adherence to sickness procedures * Surveys provide information on route causes * Staff equipped with skills to talk about mental health and stress * Improvement in motivation and employee engagement |
| **Employee involvement:**   * Good employee engagement * Managers attend the mental health one day training * All employees undertake the eLearning mental health training module * Employees will feel supported |
| **Management View:**  Senior management understand that there may be occasions where employees may find it difficult to balance the demands of everyday life due to ever increasing pressures at work, at home and in personal relationships. To this end, they are committed to managing the causes of work-related stress by visibly demonstrating their support and participating in communication activities. |