

ENA Occupational Health Committee



Stress - Initiatives

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.

Company Name: Western Power Distribution

What did the Company do:

Western Power Distribution is committed to identifying and tackling the causes of stress related illness in the workplace. It also understands that excessive stress resulting from personal or domestic causes may manifest itself in the work environment. In recognizing that action taken to prevent stress related illness is far more effective and less costly than dealing with it after it has arisen, WPD undertook an exercise to identify what measures are in place within the Company to reduce the risk of individuals encountering ill health as a result of excessive stress. The exercise also sought to identify any weak spots that needed to be addressed.

It was identified that the Company has in place a considerable number of policies and practices that will ensure, as far as reasonably practical, that individuals are not unduly subjected to stress. These policies and practices are the control measures that manage the risk of work induced stress related illness.

The policies, practices and procedures include:

- Equal Opportunity Policy
- Harassment Policy
- Standards of Conduct
- Code of Ethics
- Job Summaries
- Management of Change
- Personal Development Reviews
- Regular Team Briefings / Meetings
- Confidential Staff Survey
- Confidential Concerns Helpline
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Occupational Health
- Trade Union Representation
- HESACs
- Site Safety and Policy Compliance Visits
- Recruitment Procedures
- Pre-employment Health Assessments
- Managed-back care programme – physiotherapy treatment

DEVELOPING IMPROVEMENTS IN HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- Training (skills, operational, technical and management)
- Grievance and Disputes Procedures
- Positive Discipline
- Sickness Monitoring – including return to work discussions and welfare visits
- Flexible Working / Variable Working Hours
- Exit Interviews

The general level of stress within WPD is also assessed indirectly by monitoring factors such as absenteeism, staff turnover, complaints and formal grievances raised.

In reviewing the above, WPD has issued to specific policy documents in respect of work related stress.

1) Work Related Stress

Details the way in which WPD manages work related stress.

2) Work Related Stress – Guidance for Managers

This provides guidance to managers on issues that could increase the risk of stress to individual members of staff and to help provide guidance on how these issues may be managed. It is generally structured in line with the headings used by the HSE in their published “Management Standards for Workplace Stress” suite of documents.

Health and safety benefits:

- Puts accountability on the employee as well as the manager
- Leads to targeted solutions as opposed to generic
- Increases the capability of managers to secure an earlier return to work for his/her employees
- Reduces absence through stress related illness

Business / Cost Benefits:

- Reduced likelihood of claim
- Financial benefits from reducing absence
- Improved employee wellbeing, engagement, and performance