

# HSE SAFETY

# CORNERSTONES

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## Join EU-OSHA's 2016/17 'Healthy Workplaces for All Ages' Campaign

The retirement age in the United Kingdom has steadily been rising, and, by 2030, workers between the ages of 55 and 64 are estimated to comprise at least 30 per cent of the workforce in many European countries. Because many British workers are likely to experience longer working lives, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) has chosen to focus its 2016/17 campaign on helping organisations establish healthy workplaces for all ages. The campaign provides guidance on promoting sustainable work and healthy ageing.

A central component of the campaign is dispelling the myth that older workers are a liability. While it may take older workers more time to learn new skills, they already possess several decades' worth of experience and knowledge. Because of this, older workers should be viewed as an asset and a resource for younger, less experienced workers. However, in order for older workers to be effectively utilised in this manner, your organisation must first support a workplace culture that both encourages and supports workers of all ages.

To help your organisation establish and promote a workplace culture that supports workers of all ages, the EU-OSHA has developed the following six tools:

1. **[Age Scan](#)**: This tool provides employers with a report on the current and future age demographics of their workforce. It consists of a questionnaire and downloadable reports complete with graphs, projections and benchmarking data.
2. **[Workforce Assessment Tool](#)**: This questionnaire allows employers to assess how their organisations may be affected by retiring workers, address skills shortages caused by staff losses, create an environment that attracts qualified workers of all ages, and manage a multi-generational workforce.
3. **[Work Ability Index](#)**: This tool assesses the individual work ability of employees, based on practical occupational health care research. It helps define necessary measures for maintaining and promoting work ability, because it helps to detect, as early as possible, work-related health risks.
4. **[Age Management Checklist](#)**: This checklist helps organisations undertake an age management assessment and provides recommendations for improving their scores.
5. **[Guide to Discussing Career Prospects with Older Employees](#)**: This guide helps employers carry out conversations with their older employees about their careers.
6. **[Healthy Workplaces for All Ages E-guide](#)**: This comprehensive guide can be used by your organisation and your employees to learn more about safely working at any age.

Besides using these six resources, the campaign also encourages employers to institute practices such as mixed-age teams, mentoring programmes and job rotation/redeployment in your workplace. You can also provide annual training for your employees about best practices to adopt as they age. Depending on how successful your organisation is at encouraging and supporting a healthy workplace culture for all ages, you could receive an award at the Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards ceremony in April 2017.

For more information about how your organisation can support this type of culture or for more information about the campaign, visit <https://www.healthy-workplaces.eu>.



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## Successful Workplaces Are Mentally Healthy

Studies have shown that mentally healthy workforces tend to have higher productivity and profitability while earning customer and employee loyalty.

Mental Health Awareness Week 2016 took place from 16th to 22nd May, and findings from the Mental Resilience Survey were published to coincide with the observance week. The survey found that 60 per cent of the sampled employees admitted that mental health issues affected their everyday lives and 63 per cent wanted their employers to share the responsibility for their mental health. This would require a company to enact programmes to help its employees manage their mental health and to promote a culture of mindfulness.

To help your employees manage their mental health, and, to subsequently improve workplace productivity, your company must establish a workplace culture that promotes the importance of positive mental well-being. To do so, consider implementing these three best practices:

1. Develop a policy that outlines your company's commitment to making workplace mental health a priority. This should include programmes or initiatives that you will implement to achieve this goal.
2. Develop policies and practices for workplace harassment, violence and bullying. These should be reviewed at least annually.
3. Encourage employees to adopt a healthy work-life balance. In addition, to ensure that employees are able to achieve this goal, institute policies that support manageable workloads.

For more information about what your company can do to promote positive mental well-being, contact **Crendon Insurance Brokers Ltd** today.



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## NEWS AND PROSECUTIONS

### Take advantage of the new HSE Social Media Kit

The HSE has released a free social media kit to help companies join the conversation and show their support to '#HelpGBWorkWell'. Included in the kit is a 'Twibbon' (a Twitter ribbon) that you can include in your social media profile pictures, an 'I will HelpGBWorkWell' placard, logos and icons for strategic themes, imagery to be used on social media, and access to the LinkedIn discussion group. If you would like to participate in the campaign, the kit can be found here, [www.hse.gov.uk/strategy/media-pack.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/strategy/media-pack.htm).

### Ban on throwing mortar boards is a tired health and safety myth

Throwing your mortar board up into the air is a time-honoured graduation tradition that is plagued by a common myth—that it poses a genuine health and safety risk. In fact, the practice has regularly appeared on the HSE's Top 10 All-time Worst Health and Safety Excuses list. In its research, the HSE found that the chance of being injured by a flying mortar board is incredibly small—while the more pressing and realistic concern is retrieving the hat in good condition.

### Major frozen food manufacturer fined for safety failings

McCain Foods (GB) Limited of Havers Hill, Eastfield Scarborough, a frozen food manufacturer, was fined £800,000 and ordered to pay £12,831.51 in costs after an employee nearly lost his arm. The employee was checking the head roller on a bypass conveyor when his arm became entangled in the machinery. In its investigation, the HSE found that the company's risk assessment of the machine failed to recognise that the conveyor did not have the correct safety guards fitted.

### Supermarket cafe refused to sell packet of untoasted fruit bread

Recently, the HSE Myth Busters Challenge Panel investigated a case where a supermarket cafe refused to sell a customer a packet of fruit bread because he did not want it toasted. The cafe's reasoning was that the untoasted bread would have posed a health and safety risk to the customer. However, there is no legislation preventing the sale of untoasted bread nor any evidence to support that it would pose a risk according to the Myth Busters.