

HSE SAFETY

CORNERSTONES

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Preventing Presenteeism: How to Help Employees Decrease Workplace Stress

Nearly 90 per cent of employees admitted to observing presenteeism (coming to work when physically or mentally unwell) in the workplace this past year—more than triple the rate since 2010, according to a recent survey conducted by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. The findings mirror a recent report from the Office for National Statistics, which found that the number of working days lost due to absence has fallen to a record low of just 4.1 sick days in 2017. Presenteeism costs the economy £15.1 billion each year and erodes employee productivity, according to the Centre for Mental Health (CMH). The CMH also found that presenteeism actually costs businesses almost twice as much as absenteeism, which costs the economy about £8.4 billion each year.

Presenteeism often stems from workplace stress. If left untreated, workplace stress can result in the progression of more serious mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety, and ultimately cause higher absenteeism rates.

There are several ways you can help decrease the likelihood of workplace stress:

- **Schedule informal check-ins** with employees to monitor their stress levels and catch potential problems before they become serious.
- **Offer support and [resources](#)** to all employees. If an employee says they are struggling, offer solutions, such as a support group or helpline.
- **Implement a stress [policy](#)** that offers a detailed plan to manage work stress.

Lessening the Burden of Lung Disease

Occupational lung disease has become a serious killer among UK workers, according to recent data. In fact, work-related lung disease such as lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and mesothelioma [kills](#) nearly 12,000 Brits each year, according to the HSE. Lung disease often develops from exposure to carcinogens in the workplace such as asbestos, silica dust and diesel engine exhaust emissions. Consider the following tips to lessen the likelihood of occupational lung disease:

- **Conduct a risk assessment** where you monitor which hazardous substances (such as carcinogens) are present at your workplace and where they arise.
- **Implement proper control measures**, such as eliminating the use of a substance, using a safer substance, changing work processes to use less of a substance, limiting the number of workers using the substance and providing proper personal protective equipment, like a face shield.
- **Provide proper training** for employees who work with the substance.
- **Monitor risks** with routine health check-ups for employees and safety reports to ensure workers are following any regulations in place.

For additional health and safety guidance, contact Crendon Insurance Brokers Ltd today.

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HSE News and Prosecutions

Oil Industry Giant Fined Following Employee Injury from Gas Cylinder

Shell UK received a £60,000 fine after a technician suffered a serious injury from a gas cylinder on an offshore installation. When a technician rolled a cylinder along the floor and removed the protective cap, the trigger mechanism activated, releasing enough pressure to force the technician to drop the cylinder. This caused a valve to shear and become projectile, striking a second technician. Investigation revealed the company failed to take steps to eliminate cylinder risks, remove unsuitable pressurised cylinders in a safe manner and provide employees with appropriate training.

Property Management Company Fined for Failing to Carry Out Asbestos Survey

Thistlemoor Healthcare and Management Limited was fined £15,000 and ordered to pay costs of £1,805.60 after failing to carry out asbestos surveys on multiple accounts. The company performed construction work on two properties, both of which were likely to contain asbestos, without conducting a survey. Further investigation found the company's construction work on the properties likely disturbed asbestos-containing materials. For more information about working safely with asbestos, click [here](#).

Company Fined After Contractor Suffers Serious Injury Following Fall

A North Yorkshire company was fined £32,000 and ordered to pay costs of £2,424.60 after a worker suffered multiple broken bones following a fall from height. The worker was attempting to work from a ladder, but fell a distance of about 2 metres while working on the roof. An investigation revealed the company failed to properly plan the necessary [work at height](#) or provide suitable equipment.

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0121 45 45 100

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