Work-related stress and welfare provision in the construction industry

Scottish House Builders Health and Safety Forum
6th November 2019

Mark Ashby
Senior Policy Advisor, HSE Construction Division,
Health Unit, Glasgow

Content of presentation

- General Health Update
- What is work-related stress?
- Is there a problem in the construction industry?
- Why tackle stress?
- Solutions and positive action for tackling stress
- Current HSE and Industry work
- Welfare Provision
- Can you Help?
- Questions

Health in Construction

100:1

June 2019 Initiative

Construction June health inspection initiative: Approximately 1,000 site visits

Type	Total
Prohibition Notice	142
Health	22
Management	4
Safety	116
Improvement Notice	128
Health	39
Management	31
Safety	31
Welfare	28
ELCI	2
	273

June 2019 Initiative

Construction June health inspection initiative: Approximately 1,000 site visits

Health Topic	Rating			
	Sustainable Compliance	Limited non-compliance	Significant non-compliance	Widespread/ Extreme non-compliance
Asbestos	77%	14%	7%	3%
Other subs hazardous to health	50%	37%	7%	6%
Respirable crystalline silica	52%	27%	16%	5%
Respiratory sensitisers	43%	34%	20%	3%
Welfare	70%	16%	11%	4%

"STRESS"

Definition of stress

- Stress is defined by HSE as the "**adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them**."

- It is not an illness but can lead to physical or psychological damage to the sufferer.

- Stress affects people in different ways – what stresses one individual may have no negative impact on someone else.

Before Work   After Work

What is work related stress?

- Work related stress is stress which is caused or aggravated by work, the work environment or the workplace;

- Work related stress can occur when work is badly planned, designed or managed;

- Work related stress is not RIDDOR reportable;

- Because there are identifiable stressors, work related stress can be prevented or managed.

Stress statistics

Work-related stress, depression or anxiety

595,000
Workers suffering from work-related stress, depression or anxiety (new or long-standing) in 2017/18
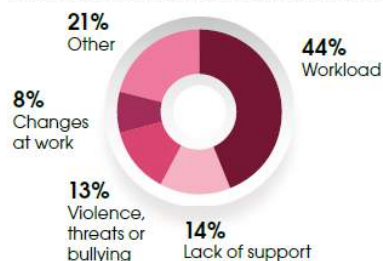
239,000
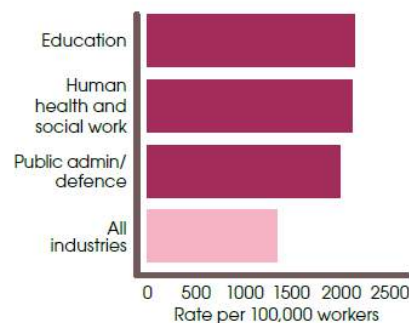Workers suffering from a new case of work-related stress, depression or anxiety in 2017/18

15.4 million
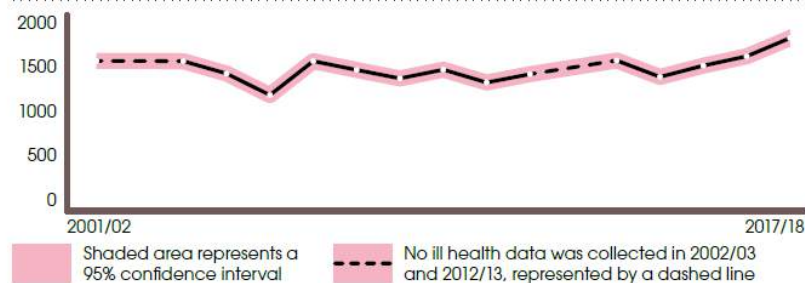Working days lost due to work-related stress, depression or anxiety in 2017/18

Stress, depression or anxiety by cause, averaged 2009/10–2011/12

- 21% Other
- 44% Workload
- 8% Changes at work
- 13% Violence, threats or bullying
- 14% Lack of support

Industries with higher than average rates of stress, depression or anxiety, 2015/16–2017/18

- Education
- Human health and social work
- Public admin/defence
- All industries

0 500 1000 1500 2000 2500
Rate per 100,000 workers

Stress, depression or anxiety per 100,000 workers: new and long-standing

2001/02 — 2017/18

Shaded area represents a 95% confidence interval

No ill health data was collected in 2002/03 and 2012/13, represented by a dashed line

The rate of self-reported work-related stress, depression or anxiety was broadly flat but has shown signs of increasing in recent years.

Working days lost per worker due to self-reported work-related stress, depression or anxiety shows no clear long-term trend.

Working days lost due to stress, depression or anxiety account for 57% of all working days lost due to ill health.

Estimates of work-related stress, depression or anxiety based on self-reports from the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

To find out the story behind the key figures, visit www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/

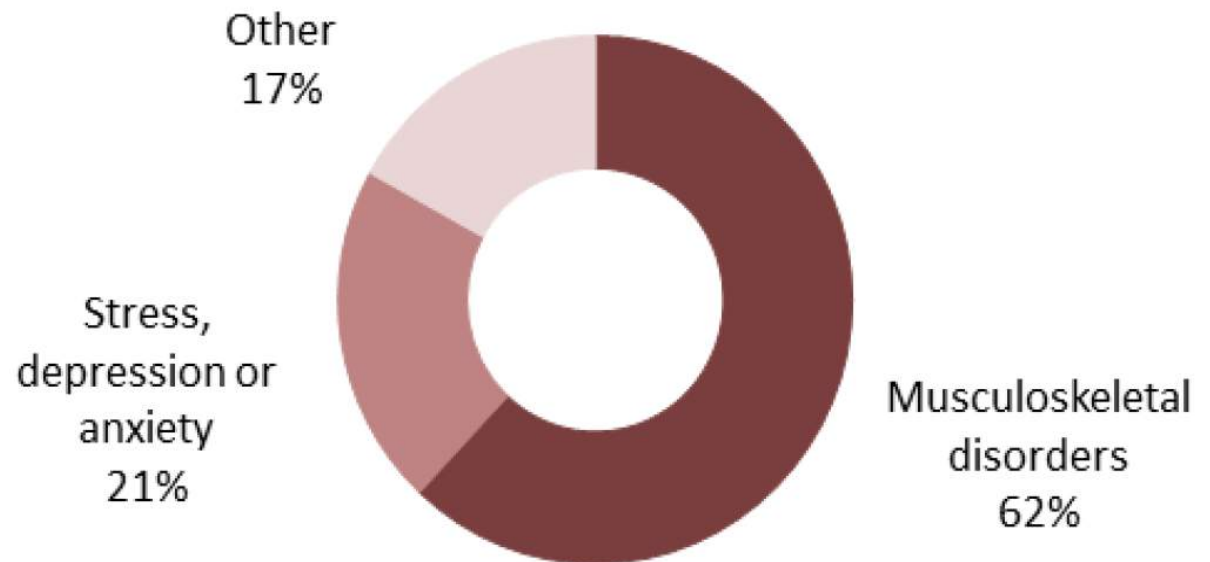Is there a problem in the Construction Industry?

Key statistics
in the Construction sector in Great Britain, 2019

79,000

workers suffering from work-related ill health (new or long-standing)

Other
17%

Stress, depression or anxiety
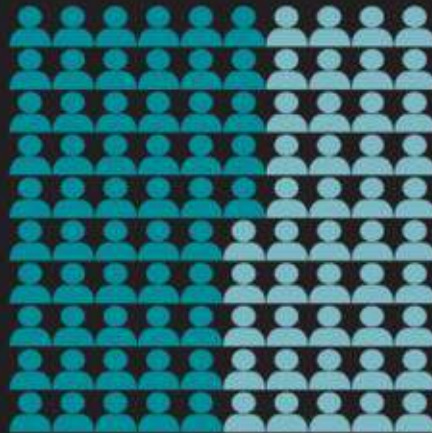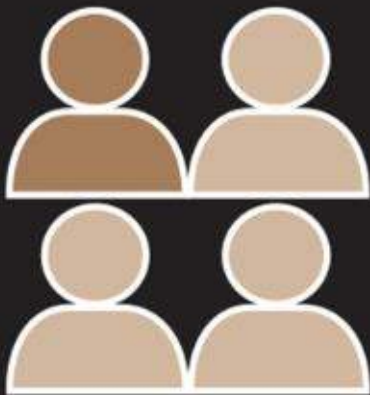21%

Musculoskeletal disorders
62%

Is there a problem in the construction industry?

MIND MATTERS SURVEY – KEY FINDINGS

1 in 4 of respondents have considered taking their own life

55% of respondents have experienced mental health issues in their lives

88% said there needs to be **more support** for those that suffer mental health issues

Is there a problem in the construction industry?

Construction Suicide Risk

The Office for National Statistics reported more suicides of construction workers than any other profession in the five years to the end of 2015.

Every working day, two construction workers take their own life.

Male construction workers are almost four times more likely to take their own lives than the national average.

If you work in construction you are 6 times more likely to die from suicide than you are a fall from height.

Why tackle stress?

The business case:

- Employee commitment to work
- Staff performance and productivity
- Attendance levels
- Staff recruitment and retention
- Customer satisfaction
- Organisational image and reputation
- Potential litigation

Why tackle stress?

The legal case:

Employers have duties under:

- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

  ✓ Requires employers to protect workers from hazards including stress caused or aggravated by work.

- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

  ✓ Requires employers to assess the risk of stress-related ill health arising from work activities and to tackle those risks where necessary.

The Management Standards are guidance to help employers comply with these duties.

Why tackle stress?

The moral case:

- There is evidence that prolonged periods of excessive pressure have an adverse effect on health

- Research provides strong links between stress and physical effects such as heart disease, back pain, headaches, gastrointestinal disturbances or various minor illnesses; and psychological effects such as anxiety and depression

- Poor coping strategies can also lead to other harmful behaviours, such as skipping meals, drinking too much caffeine or alcohol, or smoking.

Solutions for tackling stress?

- **Resilience and Mindfulness training**
  - Develop skills so people think differently about pressure to mitigate the negative impact they have
  - sometimes called coping mechanisms.
  - only benefit those who have been trained,
  - they do not tackle the cause or stressor.
  - may simply delay the problem rather than remove it.
  - alone they are will not tackle work related stress and may mean an employer is not compliant.
  - Research has shown that approaches that include a combination of organisational and other approaches is more effective for tackling stress.

Solutions for tackling stress ?

- ## Well-being

  - Well-being is a generic term for initiatives promoting good health ranging from massage or yoga to five-a-day and smoking cessation schemes.

  - Aimed at individual workers and only helps those taking part.

  - They are not designed specifically to tackle work-related stress or its causes

  However, resilience and mindfulness training or well-being initiatives alone are not enough to gain legal compliance.

Positive action for tackling stress

- Primary intervention – you need to take action to prevent stress from affecting your employees
- If your risk assessment identifies an issue with work related stress; you need to take steps to remove or reduce that problem
- Activities need to be aimed at raising awareness, changing attitudes and behaviours to mental health amongst managers and staff
- Reasonable adjustments may be required to help those with mental health conditions remain in or return to work
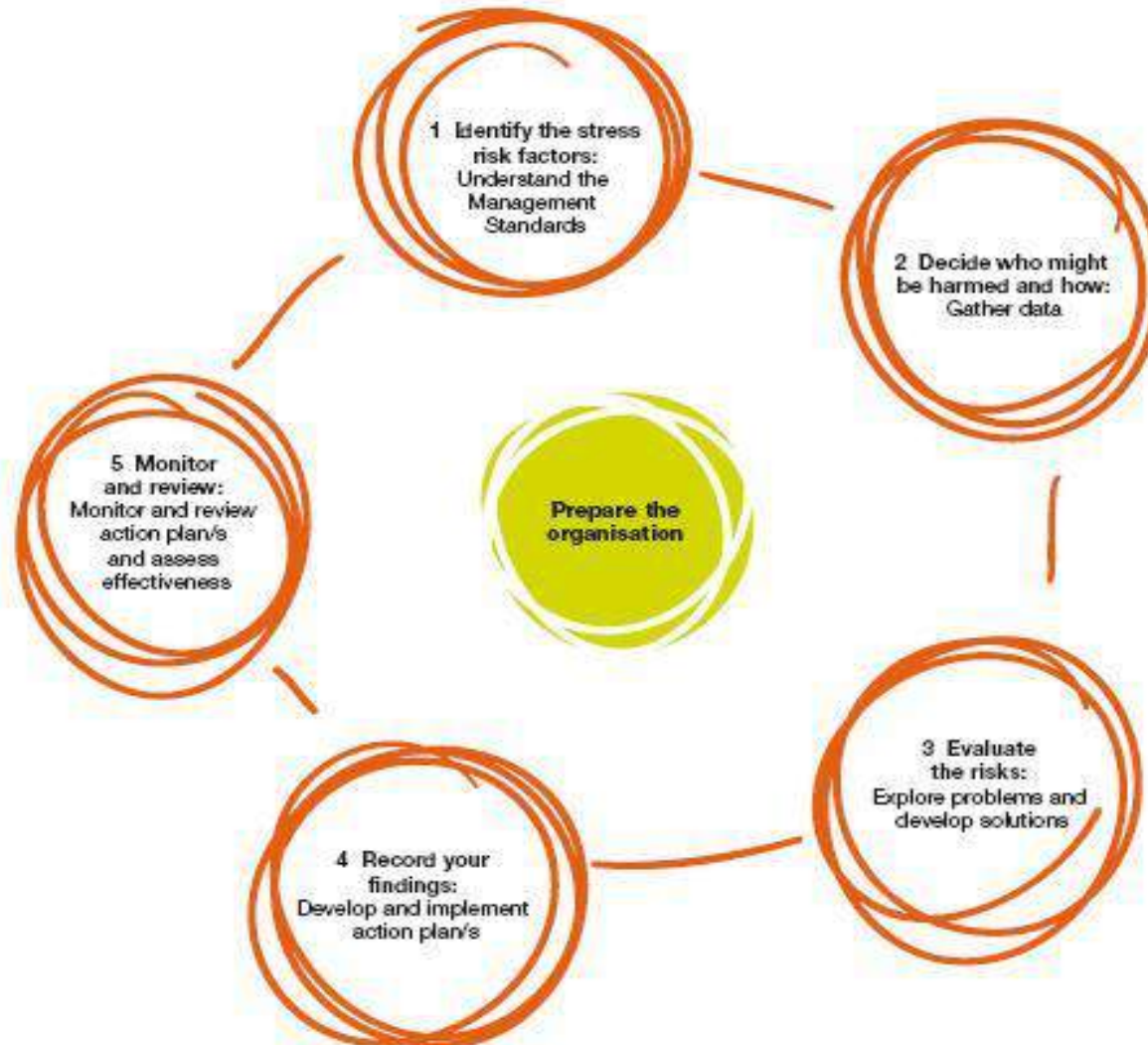
Management standards approach

HSE developed the 6 Management Standards which, if poorly managed will result in work related stress; these are:

- Demands

- Control

- Support

- Role

- Change

- Relationships

Management standards approach

HSE management standards resources

- Management standards indicator tool
  - Includes 35 questions to help organisations determine current working conditions and help monitor future improvements
- Step-by-step workbook
  - Includes a selection of checklists to allow you to be sure that each step has been achieved before you move on
- Line manager competency indicator tool
- Work-related stress case studies

TALKING TOOLKIT

GO HOME HEALTHY

PREVENTING WORK-RELATED STRESS

HSE

CONVERSATION ONE: DEMANDS }
LINE MANAGER'S TEMPLATE FOR CONVERSATION ONE

How your employee should feel
- They are able to cope with the demands of their job.
- They are provided with achievable demands in relation to the hours they work.
- Their skills and abilities are matched to the demands of their job.
- Concerns about their work environment are addressed.

Go through the following questions with your employee or team.

Does your workload feel achievable? Think about which tasks take up the most time and how your organisation copes at busy times.

Do you feel the deadlines you are given are realistic? Do you often have conflicting deadlines?

Have you had the right training to carry out the core functions of your job?

What improvements or support could be put in place to help with any of the issues you have talked about? Think about you, your line manager, your organisation.

Set a date to revisit these proposed changes

HSE health priority plan: Work-related stress

HSE want to see the following outcomes:

- A significant increase in the number of employers taking a proactive (rather than reactive) stance to managing WRS through the Management Standards approach or other suitable risk assessment methodology;

- More HR and health and safety professionals trained and competent to implement Management Standards approaches within their organisations;

- Cross-sector learning about 'what works';

- Recognition that preventive action on WRS can make a valuable contribution to the wider mental health agenda

Current HSE Activity

- Developed the 'Talking Toolkit'
- Implemented Recommendations in 'Thriving at Work' (Stevenson/Farmer review)
- First Aid guidance revised to include mental health in first aid assessments
- Re-published criteria for when HSE will consider undertaking an investigation
- encourage **prevention** through promoting use of HSE Management Standards
- Development and testing of Construction specific Talking Toolkit
- Go Home Healthy microsite

Welfare

Why welfare is important

- Reduces risk of disease and ill-health
- Promotes good hygiene
- Respect/dignity (basic human right)
- When welfare is good - everything else is usually so much better
- Its also a legal requirement

What is required to comply with the law?

Provide or make available:

- Toilets
- Washing facilities
- Drinking Water
- Changing rooms and lockers
- Rest facilities

Aims and Objectives

To ensure construction workers have access to the right welfare facilities means that they need to be:

- Suitable and Sufficient

- Adequate

- Readily Accessible

Suitable and sufficient sanitary conveniences?

Suitable and sufficient washing facilities?

Suitable and sufficient rest rooms?

Readily accessible?

Same requirements for welfare on

- Transient,
- Domestic
- Small commercial
- Large Commercial

BUT
what is 'reasonably practicable to achieve?

The approach we are taking

National Welfare Project

- Contractors
- Clients
- Designers
- CITB
- Trade Unions
- Local Authorities
- Manufacturers/Suppliers
- HSE

The approach we are taking

Framework Document

- General legal considerations

- CDM dutyholders

- General application of common terms

- Application of the above to specific areas

Focus Groups

- What are the barriers ?

- What is available ?

- What is reasonably practical to provide?

Can you help?

Questions

mark.ashby@hse.gov.uk