

# The Hidden Cost of Stress: Redefining Workplace Priorities

In the hustle and bustle of modern work life, the toll of stress on employees often goes unnoticed, but the numbers paint a stark picture. Research reveals a concerning trend: an increasing number of sick days taken by employees due to mental health issues. According to a study conducted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in 2020, work-related stress, depression, or anxiety accounted for 51% of all work-related ill health cases in the UK. Moreover, the cost of work-related stress to businesses was estimated at £5.2 billion per year, with an average of 17.9 million working days lost due to stress, depression, or anxiety. One question..... does this surprise you?

The cost of mental health-related absences to businesses is not just financial. While the financial impact is substantial, how this affects the individual and others around them cannot be overlooked. Employees experiencing high levels of stress are at risk of burnout, decreased productivity, and strained relationships in the workplace. Left unaddressed, these issues can escalate, leading to long-term absenteeism and even attrition.

In addition, External factors such as the rising cost of living, the impact of long COVID, and the alarming rates of mental health issues, particularly among men, further emphasise the importance of prioritising staff wellbeing. The Office for National Statistics reported a concerning increase in men taking their own lives in recent years, highlighting the urgent need for proactive measures to address mental health concerns in the workplace.

Recognising the significance of these challenges, organisations are increasingly prioritising employee wellbeing. However, merely recognising the importance of this and using it as a trendy 'buzz word' on documents and in marketing brochures, without taking action.....this is not enough! Employers must take proactive steps to support their staff and create a culture that fosters mental health awareness and resilience.

However we want to stress that whilst building resilience is important, it's equally crucial not to conflate resilience with the ability to ignore or suppress feelings of overwhelm or distress, or to see this as 'the norm'. Recognising when staff members are struggling and providing them with appropriate support and understanding is paramount to maintaining a happy and productive workforce.

One of the first ways to do this is to provide ourselves a moment of self reflection. It's crucial to reflect on our own wellbeing and stress levels and their potential impact on others around us. This includes considering how we interact with and treat others, as well as the tone of our communication. Engaging in self-reflection can be daunting, yet it is essential. By examining our own behavior and making necessary adjustments, we not only benefit ourselves but also create a more positive environment for those at work and at home.

Another effective strategy is to invest in wellbeing training programs that equip employees with the tools and resources to manage stress effectively. By providing access to mindfulness techniques, stress management strategies, and mental health resources, employers can empower their staff to navigate the challenges of the modern workplace with confidence.

Moreover, fostering a supportive work environment is essential in promoting employee wellbeing. Managers and leaders play a crucial role in this process by leading by example, promoting open communication, and providing ongoing support to their teams. By prioritising employee wellbeing at all levels of the organisation, employers can create a culture where mental health is valued, and employees feel safe to seek support without judgment ( especially any judgement with regards to their ability to perform their job role when well) when needed.

Ever wondered why we started Mindful Care Training and Consultancy in the very first place?! Our own negative experiences with former employers ( wanting us to leave the care industry all together!) inspired us to support others. In a strange twist, perhaps we owe a "thank you" to those experiences for leading us to where we are today?! (However, it's worth noting that following this experience, a care home company restored our faith, and we continued to work in the care industry for many many years after!)

Therefore, at Mindful Care Training and Consultancy, we understand the importance of supporting employee wellbeing in the workplace. That's why we offer tailored workshops such as "Looking After Yourself: A Mindful approach" and "Leadership Approach to Wellbeing" designed to empower employees with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive. Our training programs go beyond theoretical concepts, providing practical tools and strategies that participants can implement in their daily lives.

In conclusion, the hidden cost of stress in the workplace is too significant to ignore. Employers must take proactive steps to support their staff and create a culture that prioritises mental health and wellbeing. By investing in self-reflection, wellbeing training and fostering a supportive work environment, organisations can create a happier, healthier, and more resilient ( but listened too) workforce.

Our next "Looking after Yourself: A Mindful approach" online workshop is scheduled for Thursday, 29th February, running from 10 am to 1 pm. We invite you to take a step in supporting you ( and others) in a positive wellbeing. This session also provides opportunities for you to create a personal wellbeing plan. Plus, you'll receive a substantial resource booklet packed with valuable wellbeing and mindfulness techniques, stress management strategies, and a CPD certificate (although the certificate is not our primary focus!).

Contact [info@mindful-care.co.uk](mailto:info@mindful-care.co.uk) or book via <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/775253803997?aff=oddtcreator>

Take Care

The MCTC team

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