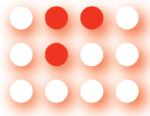


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Guidance on mental health in workplace

Mental ill health costs employers in the UK £30 billion every year through lost production, recruitment and absence, according to the employment relations service Acas.

New Acas guidance, which aims to help employers promote positive mental health in their workplaces, was published on World Mental Health Day.

Many causes of mental ill health are related to problems outside of the workplace. For example, a family bereavement or illness may lead to stress, anxiety and/or depression.

Nevertheless, even though work can be good for people's mental health (providing a sense of identity and personal achievement), the workplace can sometimes have a negative effect on mental health.

Common workplace causes of mental ill health include:

- unmanageable workloads and/or demands;
- poorly defined job roles and responsibilities;
- lack of control over work;
- unhealthy work-life balance;
- poor relationships with management and/or work colleagues;
- organisational change and/or job insecurity;

- lack of variety in work; and
- lack of career progression opportunities.

An organisation may not be able to prevent all the causes of mental ill health, but it can take steps to reduce the work-related causes.

Staff with positive mental health are more likely to work productively, interact well with colleagues and adapt to changes in the workplace. And if they are supported by their employer they are more likely to be able to stay in work or return to work after a period of absence, reducing long-term absences in the organisation.

In addition, staff who feel unable to talk to their manager may attend work when they are too ill to safely carry out their duties, which could be a health and safety risk.

Acas says an employer should develop an action plan for how it will promote positive mental health. Steps may include:

- identifying why the organisation is committed to promoting positive mental health and what the objectives of the organisation are;
- planning a range of activities and key messages to educate staff and managers and remove any stigma associated with mental ill health;
- putting support processes in place for staff experiencing mental ill health. For example, training managers in mental health and having named mental health champions in the workplace who can be approached if the employee does not want to

LABOUR RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

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talk to their manager;

- creating a mental health policy and reviewing existing policies to ensure managers and staff know where to go for support and further information when required; and
- ensuring that senior managers champion mental health awareness and act as role models to encourage healthy behaviours.

Tom Neil, head of Acas guidance, added: "With one in six workers experiencing mental health issues it makes sense for managers to have an understanding of the signs and approaches that can be taken."

www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=6065

www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/o/7/Promoting-positive-mental-health-in-the-workplace.pdf

Five blackspots for pension provision

A TUC analysis has identified pension blackspots in the UK – industries where workers are not enrolled into a pension scheme.

The analysis shows that in some industries, like hospitality and agriculture, six in 10 workers are not saving into a pension.

The TUC says many are missing out on a decent retirement because they earn less than £10,000 – the level of earnings at which employers must enrol someone into a workplace pension.

Despite the success of pension auto-enrolment, nearly nine million UK workers are still unable to save into a pension scheme.

According to the TUC, the five industries with the lowest level of pension cover are:

- agriculture, forestry and fishing – 65% of employees (93,000) do not have a pension;
- hospitality – 60% of employees (908,000) do not have a pension;
- other services (hairdressing and beauty) – 56% of employees (270,000) do not have a pension;
- construction – 50% (493,000) of employees do not have a pension; and
- arts and entertainment – 48% of employees (253,000) do not have a pension.

The TUC also found evidence of a "pension lottery" among those saving into a workplace pension.

In low-paid sectors, like wholesale and retail, nine out of 10 savers received contributions worth less than 8% of salary from their employer.

By contrast, in industries like financial services the vast majority of savers received more than 8% in contributions from their employer.

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady said: "Auto-enrolment has been a great success. But it's not a case of 'job done'."

With millions remaining at risk of poverty in retirement, the TUC has called on the government to help more low-paid workers join schemes and set out plans for increasing contributions from employers.

www.tuc.org.uk/news/tuc-reveals-pension-blackspots

Young workers lose out by up to £6,300 a year

Workers aged under-25 are missing out on between £820 and £6,300 a year because they are not entitled to the statutory National Living Wage (NLW).

The Young Women's Trust, a charity that supports young women on low or no pay, found that more than a million young people are being paid as much as £3.45 an hour less for doing the same jobs as older workers, despite having the same responsibilities and the same outgoings. Over the course of a year, they are losing out on up to £6,279.

The findings come after a major survey for Young Women's Trust showed that half of young people are struggling financially, a quarter said they are in debt all of the time and one in three put their anxiety down to their money situation.

Despite paying lower wages, employers say young people are as valuable to the workplace as older workers. Four in five employers in a YouGov poll for the charity said that young people contribute as much as or more than older people to their workplaces. Four out of five (79%) said young people should be paid the same as older people for the same work, suggesting support for extending the NLW to under-25s is strong among employers.

The charity's report, *Paid less, worth less?*, also found that apprentices are some of the hardest hit financially. The legal apprentice minimum wage of £3.50 an hour falls far short of the government's £7.50 National Living Wage, leaving them £7,280 a year worse off than workers aged 25 and over. Young Women's Trust has found that, in some cases, apprentices are given the same work and responsibilities as non-trainee workers and are being exploited.

As well as getting lower wages on the basis of age alone, under-25s who are job-seeking are entitled to less financial support than their older counterparts and Housing Benefit for 18 to 21-year-olds has been scrapped.

Dr Carole Easton, chief executive of the Young Women's Trust, said: "Young people are telling us day in, day out, that they are struggling to make ends meet.

"We all need a basic amount of money to get by, no matter how old we are. The bus to work costs the same, whether you're 24 or 26. Gas and electricity costs the same, regardless of age. Rent doesn't cost any less in your early 20s."

www.youngwomenstrust.org/what_we_do/media_centre/press_releases/680_young_people_lose_more_than_6_000_a_year_due_to_wage_discrimination
www.youngwomenstrust.org/assets/0000/8060/Paid_Less_Worth_Less.pdf

High fives for unions and their good work

New evidence of the good unions do has been published by the TUC in a series of reports.

The reports by academics Alex Bryson and John Forth take account of the characteristics of the workplace, including size, industry and ownership, to isolate the impact of unions themselves on what happens at work.

The studies also take account of how strong the union is in the workplace, and whether an individual worker is actually a member of a union or not. They also analysed the impact of collective and workplace bargaining agreements separately.

The top five findings are:

- unions are good for pay: Bryson and Forth found that unions secured a 6.5% increase in pay across like workplaces;
- unions improve training: union members are up to 5% more likely to have received off-the-job training in the past year;
- unions are better for family life: workers in unionised workplaces are less likely to say that there is a long hours culture at work, and employers in workplaces with a strong union are less likely to say that it's up to individual employees to balance their family and work life;
- unions keep the workforce stable: unions reduce the number of people who voluntarily leave their place of work, reducing turnover; and
- unions are good for innovation: Bryson and Forth found that workplaces with collective and work-

place bargaining agreements had higher scores for innovation.

These studies, says the TUC, provide fresh evidence for what union members and enlightened employers have always known – a strong union is good for workers and good for business.

www.tuc.org.uk/added-value-trade-unions

Race equality audit highlights divide

Glaring disparities between white Britons and British ethnic minorities have been revealed in a national audit of racial inequality in public services.

The *Race disparity audit* examines how people of different backgrounds are treated across areas including health, education, employment and the criminal justice system; an analytical report gives an overview of the first set of findings from the audit.

Work-related findings include the unemployment rate for black, Asian and minority ethnics adults is 8% compared to 4% for white people.

In the last three months of 2016, the average hourly pay for white employees was £13.75, while the average hourly pay for employees from other ethnic groups was £13.18 – a 4.2% race pay gap.

David Isaac, chair of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), said: "The government must tackle the significant disparities confirmed by the audit in order to address the entrenched inequality that is so prevalent in our society. Britain needs a comprehensive and coherent race equality strategy with concrete actions in response to these findings."

The EHRC, in partnership with the Runnymede Trust, the Black Training and Enterprise Group, Business in the Community and Operation Black Vote, released a new *Roadmap to race equality*.

The roadmap is a seven-part plan, which recommends employment, education, housing, health and criminal justice as the priority areas that need addressing in order to best achieve progress in race equality. It also puts equality and human rights at the heart of a post-Brexit Britain and ensures strong leadership is in place to deliver change.

The plan says that action should be taken to:

- reduce the ethnicity employment and pay gaps so that everyone has a chance to get a job that

matches their abilities and is fairly rewarded for it;

- improve educational outcomes so that every child has a fair chance to fulfil their potential irrespective of their ethnicity;
- tackle the disproportionate numbers of ethnic minority groups living in substandard, overcrowded and inappropriate accommodation;
- improve access to healthcare and health outcomes; and
- improve trust and ensure fairness in the criminal justice system where ethnic minorities are over-represented both as victims and defendants of crime.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/race-disparity-audit

<https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/>

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/roadmap-race-equality

Factory output rosier

UK factories contributed to an overall increase in the output of the production industries, official figures show.

Manufacturing output in the three months to August increased by 0.7% on the previous three-month period ending May.

Eight out of the 13 subsectors posted increases including a 4.6% increase in computer and electronic products, 3.9% in electrical equipment and 3.8% in other manufacturing and repair.

Offsetting these increases were falls of 2.8% in coke and refined petroleum products and 1.3% in rubber and plastic products.

Factory output was up by 2.3% on the same period a year ago.

The more volatile monthly figures show a 0.4% increase in manufacturing output in August on the previous month and a 2.8% increase on the same month a year ago.

The production industries (mining and utilities as well as manufacturing) saw output increase by 0.9% in the three-month period ending August compared with previous three-month period.

Production output was up by 1.2% on the same period a year ago.

In August, the monthly increases were 0.2% on July and 1.6% on the same month 2016.

www.ons.gov.uk/economy/economicoutputandproductivity/output/bulletins/indexof-production/august2017

Zero-hours congrats

The UK's leading supplier of outsourced hospitality and housekeeping services is to show the door to zero-hours contracts.

WGC has said it will abolish zero-hours contracts in a major step forward for workers and is calling on the UK hotel industry to follow its lead and work with the union.

More than 5,000 workers employed as housekeepers, room attendants and porters in hotels up and down the country working under WGC hotel sector contracts, will be offered the opportunity to move to a guaranteed minimum hour contract from November 2017.

Dave Turnbull, regional officer for the Unite general union, said: "Now we need the rest of the industry to follow its lead."

Unite has teamed up with the International Union of Food Workers, and unions from around the world to mark Global Hotel Housekeepers week in October — a worldwide campaign for dignity and safe work for hotel housekeepers.

<http://unitelive.org/it-can-be-done/>

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