



Wellbeing in the Workplace: Focus on depression and mental health



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World Health Day
Health Awareness Day is celebrated globally every year on 7 April, under the sponsorship of the World Health Organisation (“WHO”). It is used as an opportunity by the Organisation to draw worldwide attention to a subject of major importance to global health.

This year the theme is “Depression: Let’s Talk”. The aim is to mobilise action on depression, help reduce stigma associated with the illness and lead to more people seeking help.

What is depression?
The WHO website contains some useful information on depression: <http://www.who.int/campaigns/world-health-day/2017/handouts-depression/en/>

Why should you care as an employer?
The following statistics from the HSE for 2015/2016 illustrate how stress, depression and anxiety may be affecting your workforce:

- The total number of working days lost due to work-related stress, depression or anxiety was 11.7 million days. This equated to an average of 23.9 days lost per case.
- Stress accounted for 37% of all work related ill health cases and 45% of all working days lost due to ill health.
- The main factors cited as causing work related stress, depression or anxiety were workload pressures, including tight deadlines, too much responsibility and a lack of managerial support.

Not only do the statistics support that depression is clearly causing an issue for

businesses but you should also be mindful that depression may be considered to be a disability and therefore be covered under the Equality Act 2010.

Where individuals are deemed to have a qualifying disability, employers are under a duty to make reasonable adjustments where an element of an individual’s work places them at a substantial disadvantage.

Compensation for successful discrimination claims is uncapped and the maximum award made in 2015/2016 was £257,127, with an average award of £21,729.

What can you do?
You may decide to use World Health Day as an opportunity to promote wellbeing in the workplace with a focus on depression and mental health issues and what you as a business can do to support employees. It is of benefit to:

- Review your policies and procedures and ensure that they are up to date, legally compliant and being actively followed in the workplace;
- Provide training to upskill managers in understanding and supporting employees suffering from mental illness;
- Provide training to all staff to assist in understanding and reducing mental health stigma.

Effective employers know that a business is only as strong as its people, wellbeing

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and motivation is therefore fundamental to how a business performs as a whole and is something that should be reviewed and addressed.

Brachers can support you develop a thriving workplace and business by supporting you with a wellbeing strategy through our legal and HR services.

For further information please visit brachers.co.uk or contact us on 01622690691.

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