

Start Living – Stop Stressing

National Stress Awareness Day is 3 November 2010. Stress management has never been more relevant. Hectic lifestyles, demanding jobs and financial pressures all contribute to a feeling of being “under stress.”

Whereas stress itself is not an illness but a state of mind, a prolonged feeling of excessive stress can make you ill, literally. Stress has been linked to high levels of sickness absence, staff turnover and other indicators of organisational underperformance, including human error.

“As a manager you have a legal and moral duty to ensure that work does not adversely affect your team. Understanding how to spot the signs of stress and then knowing what to do to reduce stress is the way forward,” says Richard Maybury from Priority Management.

“Based upon my training conversations with thousands of people, as well as looking at relevant research, I have concluded the biggest cause of work-

related stress is feeling out of control. It is generally not the volume of work, unrealistic targets, nor the team being stretched thin, per se. It is that sense of not being able to control the competing (and often conflicting) priorities within a demanding workday.”

Richard has 3 tips to help regain that sense of control:

1 Give yourself a good talking to: Given that you probably can't work any harder on a sustainable basis, ask yourself how robust your current workload and priority management processes are.

2 Reconnect with your purpose and strategy: both professionally and personally, aligning our purpose to priorities within the



Richard Maybury

workload helps us make tougher decisions easier.

3 Create clarity: Use fewer management tools and integrate them better. Many people use far too many tools to manage information flows and all the other inputs that make up their total workload, or even rely on their memory – this in itself is a major stressor.

Some key statistics

- In 2008/09 more than 415,000 people in Britain experienced work-related stress at a level that was making them ill

- More than 11.4 million working days were lost in the UK in 2008/2009 due to work-related stress, depression or anxiety

- The average length of sick leave for an incidence of work-related stress, depression or anxiety is 26.8 working days

The International Stress Management Association is holding the 12th annual National Stress Awareness Day on 3 November 2010. To find out how your organisation can get involved visit www.isma.org.uk/national-stress-awareness-day/index.html

Get ready for new rules on pensions

Did you know that new workplace pension reforms set to come into force in 2012 will see all employers obliged to enrol employees into an approved private sector pension scheme?

The legislation is aimed at encouraging people to save for retirement. Contributions will be shared among employers, employees and the government, with employers paying 3% of qualifying earnings i.e. gross pay between £5,035 and £33,540, into the scheme.

	Employer Contributions	Jobholder Contributions (including tax relief)	Total
Staging date to October 2016	1%	1%	2%
October 2016 to October 2017	2%	3%	5%
October 2017 onwards	3%	5%	8%

Aside from the private sector Personal Account, an alternative route is to opt into the National Employment Savings Trust (NEST), a new provision managed by a government-appointed Corporation which is targeted at low to medium earners without access to a private pension scheme through their employer.

Although the legislation is currently in draft format and subject to change, it is likely SMEs will have until 2016 or 2017 to become fully compliant with the new rules.

More information about pension reform can be found at www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/pensions-reform/

Sign up for email alerts and e-bulletins

Branch activities are increasingly popular and members are disappointed when missing out on overbooked events.

Occasionally, we will release details of bookings via emails and e-bulletins and we would encourage all IoD West Surrey members to give us the authority to contact them in this manner, and update us about any changes.

We will never pass on these details to any third parties, and will limit email contact to avoid spamming you and clogging inboxes.

If you are not already registered, just email Polly Buckley at admin.westsurrey@iod.net to sign up.