



New research aimed at improving UK line management through identifying key stress management competencies

Press Office

New research and guidance on the behaviours required by managers to prevent and reduce stress in the workplace is published today.

The research jointly funded by the *Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)*, the *Health and Safety Executive (HSE)* and *Investors in People (IIP)*, is part of a three-year project to identify the management behaviours that will help organisations reduce stress at work and comply with the HSE stress management standards.

The research has led to the development of a competency framework setting out the key management behaviours for managing stress at work. The behaviours are grouped under 12 competency headings including: acting with integrity; managing conflict; empathetic engagement; participative/empowering; and managing emotions.

Ben Willmott, employee relations adviser at the CIPD, said: "This research and guidance shows that managing stress at work is part and parcel of good people management. Employers that invest in training and developing their managers to ensure they exhibit the behaviours that manage stress at work will also reap benefits in terms of reduced conflict and staff turnover, as well as increased motivation and commitment."

The practical guidance is badly needed to help improve the quality of line management across UK plc and contribute to the development of healthy and productive workplaces.

Stress and other mental health problems are the second biggest cause of working time lost to sickness absence, costing the UK an estimated £26bn a year.

Judith Hackitt, HSE Chair, said: "My key message to line managers today is that normal good management activities can and should incorporate effective stress management behaviours. The management competency research provides managers with a clear understanding of those behaviours that should be shown and those that should be avoided to help minimise stress and improve well being for those that they manage. This research points to the need for managers to embed stress management into everyday people management activities and into their organisation's culture. This joint research initiative is a good example of the quality of output which can be achieved through partnership working."

"Work-related stress accounts for over a third of all new incidences of ill health. HSE has developed 'stress management standards' to help organisations manage this problem and we want employers/managers to tackle stress in the workplace and implement these management standards that are key to a healthy organisation and good corporate social responsibility."

Rob Hargreaves, leading focus into health and wellbeing at Investors in People, added: "Regardless of what benefits an organisation offer its employees, if they are not managed well and feel unsupported, this can lead to a very unhealthy working environment."