

Wellbeing expert appears on HSE podcast

One of the world's leading experts in wellbeing has endorsed the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Working Minds campaign, highlighting the importance of targeting smaller businesses.

Professor Sir Cary Cooper joined HSE Chair Sarah Newton on HSE's latest podcast to mark the first anniversary of Working Minds, where they discussed the value of good mental health, the impact work-related stress can have on staff and how employers can spot the signs of stress.

A frequent contributor to national newspapers, TV and radio, Professor Cooper has written more than 450 scholarly articles for academic journals and is the author/editor of over 170 books. Professor Cooper teaches organisational psychology and health at the University of Manchester and received a knighthood from the Queen in 2014 for his contribution to social sciences.

HSE's Working Minds campaign encourages employers to start to tackle work-related stress and to talk to their staff and take steps to support employees with their mental health in the workplace. Its main aim is to raise awareness of stress and the impact it has on mental health of workers and businesses.

Professor Cooper said: "A lot of the bigger companies since the financial crisis of 2008-2015, have really treated stress at work and wellbeing much more seriously, much more strategically. There are now directors of health and wellbeing in many of the big companies and public sector bodies. Indeed, the NHS have.

"Every hospital in the NHS has a non-executive director on its board who's responsible for employee health and wellbeing. The real issue, and I think why this campaign is a really important one is for the SME sector, small and medium sized enterprises, because they don't have big HR departments, chief medical officers, and so on."

HSE's research highlighted that many employers are unaware of their legal duties or how to spot the signs of stress. In response, Working Minds looked to develop networks to promote the legal duties by encouraging employers and workers across all sectors of the economy to sign up as campaign champions. The campaign also has a series of partners who work with HSE to highlight issues around work-place stress and its impact on mental health.

HSE Chair Sarah Newton said: "Most employers will understand that it's their responsibility to think about the physical risks, the physical health concerns that people can have at work, But what they don't often realise is they have an equal responsibility to the psychological wellbeing of their staff. So part of our campaign is to remind employers of those legal responsibilities. They do have a duty to do risk assessments of their employees for both physical and psychological risks to ill health, and then

to provide them with the toolkits to enable them to assess the risk and then manage and mitigate the risk.”

Working Minds encourages employers to promote good mental health in the workplace through collective behaviours and forming habits using the 5 Rs: **Reach out, Recognise, Respond, Reflect** and **make it Routine**.

To listen to the full podcast with Professor Sir Cary Cooper click here: [One year of Working Minds: podcast with Prof Cary Cooper – Work Right to keep Britain safe](#)

To become a Working Minds champion click here: [Working Minds – Champions – Work Right to keep Britain safe](#)

Notes to editors

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain’s national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise. [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk)
2. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
3. To read more about HSE’s Working Minds campaign click here: <https://workright.campaign.gov.uk/campaigns/working-minds/>