

B.B. Price Group of Companies - COVID Risk Assessment Stress in the Workplace

BACKGROUND

It has been well documented in the media that the COVID-19 crisis has had the capacity to impact adversely on the mental health of all of us who have lived through it.

Some people struggle with the fear of catching the disease and the loneliness brought about by lockdown. People may have different reactions to this period of change whether liking or disliking enforced restrictions or considering the structure of their lives including working from home. For people with existing mental conditions, this period has brought new anxieties and challenges caused by worsening symptoms.

Working from home has caused its own complications and blurred for some people the work/life balance. Working at home while juggling home-schooling or frequent COVID related absences from education has proven to be stress-provoking. Using new technology at home in a non-office environment has caused both anxiety and physical discomfort.

For others continuing to come into work whilst having underlying health conditions or somebody at home with underlying health conditions to which they could potentially pass the virus is a further cause of stress. As COVID restrictions are lifted and there is a spike in infections this once again brings COVID related stress to the fore.

Risks

- Increase levels of poor mental health and well-being connected to the pandemic.
- Increase levels of poor mental health as COVID restrictions are relaxed whilst coronavirus is still prevalent in society.

At-Risk

- Those at risk are all employees of the company.

Controls

- Provision of mental health awareness, wellbeing, guidance and support.
- Including occupational health support as required.

COVID RELATED STRESS IN THE WORKPLACE RISK ASSESSMENT

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed or at risk? What factors put them at risk?	General controls	Further controls	Who monitors or actions response?	Risk level
<p>Increased levels of poor mental health and well-being connected to the pandemic and COVID-19</p> <p>Increased levels of poor mental health as COVID restrictions are relaxed whilst coronavirus is still prevalent in society</p>	<p>Persons at risk: (1) All employees especially those:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With underlying health conditions • With family member with underlying health conditions • Persons more vulnerable or susceptible to stress • Persons unwilling or unable to have vaccinations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing government guidelines, especially those for workplace hygiene • Refreshing COVID awareness in the workplace to keep employees focused on reducing the spread • Workplace communication to promote awareness of stress and encourage people to communicate with managers if relevant to their situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refreshing manager's knowledge of stress, what can cause it and how to identify it • Responding to patterns of increased absence due to work-related stress • Checking fit notes to identify possible patterns and talking with line managers • On-going communication with employees and colleagues to gather information about possible stress in the workforce 	<p>Health & safety managers</p> <p>Health & Safety managers and line managers</p> <p>Line managers</p> <p>Line managers</p>	
	<p>(2) Stress factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worry over the contracting virus • Worry of loved ones contracting virus • Worry over financial security if taken ill • Stress on relationships • Stress over divorce or separation • Stress over the news, rising COVID infections or any restrictions applied by the government • Stress over feeling isolated • Stress of working from home and balancing work/home life boundaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managers to look for patterns of behaviour that possibly indicates stress • Open door policy for persons who wish to communicate stress issues • Managers are encouraged to speak to employees who report difficulties or have patterns of absence from work • Support of staff during and after periods off work • Consideration is given to those who may be more vulnerable to stress amongst the workforce so that communication or support can be maintained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging employees to talk to managers about their difficulties • Look for employees complaining in particular areas/environments which may cause them stress – particularly where close contact may be necessary • Talk to employees reporting difficulties about the support that is available to them such as speaking to their doctor or company's free occupational health counselling 	<p>All company management</p> <p>Line managers</p> <p>All company managers</p>	Low