

## **News Release**

### **NHS Employers targets stress in the workplace**

13 May 2005

NHS Employers today launches a national campaign to help combat stress in the workplace.

At his keynote speech at the HR in the NHS conference, Steve Barnett, director of NHS Employers, said more needs to be done to combat the stress levels suffered by NHS staff in the workplace and the impact of stress-related sickness absence on the delivery of patient care.

He outlined a campaign to help employers to target signs of stress in their employees and to take steps to reduce them.

Steve said:

'The impact of stress on employees who work in the NHS is vastly underestimated. Work-related stress is responsible for 30% of sickness absence in the NHS, costing the service £300-400 million per year. When you extrapolate that across the 600 trusts in the country and take into account that the greatest impact of stress is in the hospital sector, that's a significant financial burden for each trust. That's money that could be much better invested in patient care.

We know that employees feel stress in the workplace - the Healthcare Commission's staff survey results this year showed that 36% of staff suffered from work pressure in the past year. And we know that managers need more information and support to deal with employee stress in their trusts.

Our campaign will help to create an open culture in the NHS where the signs and symptoms of stress are tackled proactively.'

NHS Employers pledges the following:

- To provide tools to employers to allow them to identify, monitor and manage workplace stress
- To provide information, advice and support to staff through their employers in order to prevent, identify and tackle the effects of stress
- To raise awareness among key stakeholders including politicians and the media