



## PRESS RELEASE

### **EMPLOYEE ALLERGIES ARE COSTING UK BUSINESSES £2 BILLION PER YEAR<sup>1</sup>**

New research released by air purification specialists, [Fellowes](#), in association with [Allergy UK](#), reveals airborne allergy sufferers could be **costing their employer on average £892.64<sup>2</sup> per person per year in lost revenue** through time off sick and reduced productivity.

The British Airborne Allergy report\*, which was commissioned to launch Fellowes' new AeraMax™ range of air purifiers, shows that **more than a third (36%) of the UK workforce suffers from some form of airborne allergy, including hay fever.**

**The average time spent off work due to allergies per year is 6.1 days per employee**, with one in ten admitting to have had time off following a reaction.

And where sufferers persevere and turn up to the office, one in ten said their symptoms were worse at work, even when indoors.

The health and wellbeing of the employee is compromised further with **more than a quarter (25 per cent) exhausted and 9 per cent suffering depression as direct result of their allergies.**

Speaking about the findings, Fellowes spokesman, Mike Booth, said: "The devastating emotional impact allergies have on employees shouldn't be underestimated as the financial implications to businesses are severe.

"We are now spending around 90% of our time indoors, including our time at the office. Knowing that indoor air can be five times more polluted than outdoor air<sup>3</sup>, the office can be a real issue for allergy sufferers. Air purifiers can help remove and reduce allergens such as pollen, dust mite debris and mould spores to make breathing easier and reduce symptoms.

"Small and unobtrusive, they're neat enough to fit into any office space and can be moved around to work where they're most needed to improve indoor air quality."

Allergy UK spokesperson, Lindsey McManus, Deputy CEO of Allergy UK, agrees. She says helping to manage conditions within a work environment can have a positive impact on health and wellbeing at work.

Lindsey explains: “Britain has one of the highest allergy rates in the world. This isn’t a problem that is going away. Businesses and employees need to be more aware of the difficulties faced by people with respiratory allergy within the work environment.

“Coping with allergies such as asthma, hay fever and allergic rhinitis requires a good allergen management plan. The correct use of medication is vitally important and we would advise sufferers to discuss this with their GP or pharmacist but also to consider all allergen avoidance options within the work place, such as having enclosed storage for files, clear desk policy and the use of air purifiers, as part of a healthy office environment.”

The British Airborne Allergy report was commissioned in line with the launch of Fellowes **AeraMax™** range of air purifiers, which are scientifically proven to reduce exposure to allergens and endorsed by Allergy UK.

As well as its high performance features, the **AeraMax™** boasts a sensor which monitors air quality and automatically adjusts the fan speed to keep air purified to help reduce the severity of a reaction. Its **Aera+™ Mode** is designed for peak allergy conditions and can increase airflow by up to 50% depending on the size of model – for the full report, click [here](#).

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For media enquiries, case studies and additional commentary please contact Sam Bramwell or Manisha Jani on 01625 822 200 or email [Manisha.jani@mccann.com](mailto:Manisha.jani@mccann.com)

Calls out of office hours, contact 077381 96667

#### **Notes to editors**

\*British Airborne Allergy Report is independent research commissioned by Fellowes in association with Allergy UK and carried out by Dynamic Markets in May 2014.

<sup>1</sup>Calculations / assumptions: The total cost in the UK of being off work due to airborne allergies = cost per year of 1 employee doing it x number of employees that do it = £892.64 x 2,332,451 = £2,082,041,752 pa (or £2,082 billion).

<sup>2</sup>The average salary of a UK employee = £38,047 (source: Eurostat Data - Table: Earnings in the business economy (average gross annual earnings of full-time employees 2009). Over a 52-week year and 5 days per week, this works out at £38,047 / (52x5) = £146.33 per day per employee. Therefore, the cost of 1 UK employee a year being off work due to these ailments = 6.1 days x £146.33 per day = £892.64 pa.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.epa.gov/region1/communities/indoorair.html>

#### **About Fellowes:**

Fellowes, Inc. offers an extensive range of products to equip the workspace, including paper shredders, binders, laminators, desktop accessories and record storage solutions.

Founded in 1917 by Harry Fellowes and headquartered in Itasca, Illinois, Fellowes, Inc. employs more than 1,200 people throughout the world and has operations in 15 countries. Visit [fellowes.com](http://fellowes.com) for more information.

### **About Allergy UK**

Allergy UK is the operational name of the British Allergy Foundation; the leading national medical charity providing advice, information and support to people with allergies and food intolerance. Allergy UK acts as the 'voice' of allergy sufferers, representing the views and needs of those affected by this multi organ disease. Allergy UK is a certified member of The Information Standard, which is an independent certification scheme for health and social care information supported by the Department of Health. For further information and to see a list of all certified members to the scheme, please visit: [www.theinformationstandard.org](http://www.theinformationstandard.org)