



Press Release

HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN THE WORKPLACE – NEW RESEARCH REVEALS A ‘MAKE DO AND MEND’ CULTURE IS COMPROMISING WORKSTATION SAFETY AND COMFORT

- More than a quarter of employees left to carry out their own workstation risk assessments.
- In 80 per cent of companies staff resort to homemade workstation solutions.
- And yet half of all companies accept it is the responsibility of line managers to provide a fit for purpose workstation environment.

More than three quarters of UK employers (80 per cent) are guilty of letting homemade workstation solutions jeopardise the safety and comfort of employees, according to a new European survey, commissioned by leading office ergonomics experts, **Fellowes**.*

Despite over half of companies (62 per cent) acknowledging that as employers they have a duty to influence the physical and mental health of their staff, the research has revealed that trained staff are less likely to undertake workstation assessments than non-trained staff, with 31 per cent of employees left in charge of conducting their own self-assessments as opposed to trained health and safety officers or HR managers.

Despite half of all companies acknowledging that it is the responsibility of line managers to provide a fit for purpose workstation environment, it is clear from the research that work demands, physical health and the working environment are not being correctly addressed, as 22 per cent of employees raised concerns that they experience physical discomfort at their desk on a daily basis.

The research throws into question how equipped, skilled or trained those responsible for completing workstation assessments are in UK workplaces and how much damage is this ‘make do and mend’ culture having on the health and wellbeing of the workforce.

In over a quarter of organisations (27 per cent), staff raised concerns that their monitor or display screens were not appropriate for their needs and more than one fifth (21 per cent) of office based staff weren’t aware of any legal requirements when assessing a display screen.

Darryl Brunt, UK & Ireland Sales and Marketing Director at Fellowes, said: “The topic of employee wellbeing has grown in popularity over the past few years, especially with the recovery of the job market and the need to attract and retain the right caliber of employee. However, it is still evident that some businesses are overlooking the importance of their staff’s health and wellbeing needs. Creating a safe environment so an employee feels both at ease and comfortable will only improve productivity and benefit organisations in the long term.”

It appears that the health and wellbeing needs of new members of staff are being prioritised over and above longer-serving members, with workstation assessments only being prompted by the arrival of a new member of staff in 22 per cent of organisations.

For those longer serving members of staff, the research revealed workstation assessments were only conducted on request in one third of companies and even then a workstation assessment would only trigger change in one in five organisations.

This latest research further supports the fact that getting the nation working well is so important for staff morale and maximising productivity in the workplace. And while 66 per cent of employers admit that these factors do affect ergonomic purchasing decisions, only 21 per cent of companies have purchased ergonomic products to resolve these issues within the past six months, fuelling this rising ‘make do and mend’ office culture.

However, of those companies who have invested in ergonomic products, 66 per cent have reported seeing enhancements in the performance of their staff.

Commenting on the research results and the importance of good health and wellbeing in the workplace, **Professor Peter Buckle, from the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design, Royal College of Art and Former President of the Chartered Institute of Ergonomics and Human Factors**, says: “Modern offices are highly complex systems. Understanding the health and wellbeing of staff in the modern workplace is an on-going struggle for many organisations.

“Clearly the application of the discipline of ergonomics is an important part of ensuring that systems are performing at their peak whilst maintaining a workforce that is both healthy and satisfied at work.

“The appropriate selection and use of ergonomic equipment can help deliver performance enhancements but the way that work is structured and organised is also extremely important. The role of ergonomic and human factor specialists in helping to deliver this should be considered by all good organisations.”

For more information about health and wellbeing in the workplace and to download the **wellbeing at work guide, produced by Fellowes in partnership with Sereniti**, please visit: **(link to guide)**.

For your chance to win a three hour health and wellbeing consultancy or workshop from **AMC²** and Managing Director, Ann McCracken, for your place of work and a desk makeover from **Fellowes**, complete with free **Ergo** products to make your workspace safer, more comfortable and more productive, please visit: **(link to competition)**.

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Notes to Editors:

**The survey represents the findings of 832 respondents from across Europe (195 respondents from the UK) and was carried out across 17 sectors and across a mix of small to large organisations, with 46 per cent of respondents working for large organisations (250+ employees).*

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 www.fellowes.com for more information.