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UNCOMFORTABLE EMPLOYEES COST UK BUSINESSES £52 BILLION PER YEAR*

11th April 2012. New research reveals that employees who can't get comfortable at their desk could be costing their employer on average £3,279* per person per year in lost revenue through time off sick and reduced productivity.

70% of employees reported spending an average 51 minutes per day rearranging their workspace and fidgeting to get comfortable – that's 24.4 lost working days per employee per year from just fidgeting alone!

With 71% of employees having already suffered from ailments during the past three years, as a direct result of using computers for work, employers can't afford not to invest in providing a safe and comfortable working environment for their employees, especially when they share workspaces and work from multiple locations.

Employees reported suffering from ailments such as headaches (32%), tense shoulders (29%), neck ache (28%), eye problems (27%) and sore wrists and arms (25%) which all affected their ability to work productively.

The research, commissioned by office specialists Fellowes, interviewed 1,000 workers across the UK and found that despite being a legal requirement for all businesses to carry out, only 45% of those questioned had been given a Workstation risk assessments - designed to identify and resolve issues which might cause poor posture or pain. People who work from home are even more at risk with only 18% having had such an assessment.

Worryingly almost one in 5 employees stated that there is no help or support from their company in relation to creating a comfortable workspace – in fact UK employees are worse off than workers in Germany and the Netherlands who receive much greater support from their organisations.

A workstation risk assessments is a simple and easy process for any business or employee to implement. Creating a comfortable, healthy and productive environment for employees is not a big investment but it can positively affect the overall performance and productivity of an organisation.

Interestingly, taking a proactive approach to ergonomics can also bolster a company’s reputation and employee commitment as well as serving as a good indicator for future employees. 46% reported that they would feel proud to work for a company that took employee well-being seriously, 29% would feel more motivated, 28% would be more efficient and 14% of people would even consider changing companies to a more ergonomically focussed company.

Louise Shipley at Fellowes commented: “With UK employees now spending an average of 6.7 hours a day working at a computer, the concerns of lost productivity and revenue are only going to increase. Workstation risk assessments are part of Health and Safety law but employers should also educate and encourage employees to highlight problem areas so that any reductions in productivity or time off sick can be rectified and business improvements ultimately made.”

“Sitting in an ergonomically correct position can prevent a variety of serious ailments including back and wrist pain and ergonomic products are available to help improve certain areas of an employee’s posture. Creating an ergonomic workspace is not a complex or expensive undertaking, but long term it can save a business a great deal of money. The first step is to carry out a simple, workstation risk assessment, which will identify the issues which need addressing.”

To find out if you have any potential risk areas at your workstation, take the simple Fellowes workstation risk assessment at www.ergo.fellowes.com/en/workstation-assessment.

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Notes to Editors:

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UK data 2001/12

A	Minutes wasted per day from research	51
B	Minutes per year wasted (Ax5x46)	11,730
C	Days per year wasted (B/480)	24.4
D	Average UK Salary	£34,890
E	Average salary per week (D/52)	£670.96
F	Average salary per day (E/5)	£134.19
G	Cost of fidgeting per year per worker (FxC)	£3,279.32
H	Number of computer workers in UK	16,200,200
I	Total cost to UK businesses (GxH)	£53,125,713,076.44

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 for more information.