



Mapping work related stress hotspots

Situation

For many years, our strategy for supporting employees' mental health primarily centred on treatment options, such as providing access to our Employee Assistance telephone support line and facilitating management referrals to occupational health. However, it became clear that we needed to place greater emphasis on preventative mental health strategies.

Our data indicated that stress and mental health issues were among the leading causes of sickness absence, and this was also the primary reason employees utilised our Employee Assistance Programme. Many of our staff face demanding workloads within an organisational culture characterised by high operational and technical expectations. As a result, we aimed to implement a comprehensive, tiered approach to stress management that would be applicable to the entire workforce.

To achieve this, we required a method to effectively measure the extent of the issue. Although a process for assessing stress risk was already in place, it was time-consuming to convert this information into actionable business intelligence that team leaders could use to address identified risks.

Our approach

We have used our annual employee survey Grid:voice as a process to identify risk factors for work-related stress. Using the UK Health & Safety Executives (HSE) approach to stress management, we mapped the HSE six stress management standards to questions within Grid:voice to develop an assessment tool to measure work-related stress across the whole organisation, as well as Business Units and teams.



To interpret the data, we have also developed a data dashboard using Microsoft Power BI to create a heatmap of the organisation and its unique business areas to pinpoint teams and departments at risk of work-related stress. The advantage of this dashboard being that it has allowed us to engage senior business leads in owning their business area work-related stress risks. Our stress management programme also includes individual and team level intervention, again using the HSE management standards approach, in the form

of Individual and Team Wellbeing Risk Assessments for stress that are undertaken by employee line managers. A success of developing the organisational stress risk dashboard and heatmap is that it has enabled us to apply a traffic light risk system, whereby for any team that is showing a red or amber score their manager is required to carry out a Team Wellbeing Risk Assessment to further explore potential areas of work-related stress in more detail, as well as develop an action plan to address these risks.

Outcomes

The tool has enabled National Grid to provide insights and data back to the business, which was previously absent, in highlighting the business areas with the highest stress risks. This has enabled early and proactive interventions to be put into place, whether this was via individual or team stress risk assessments, to dig deeper into the reasoning behind specific scores. The tool has been adopted by the US arm of the business over the last two years, and National Grid annually has over 30,000 employees taking part in their organisational stress risk assessment, which feeds the tool. It also supports our DEI agenda as we have enhanced the tool to allow work-related stress risk assessment by specific DEI areas such as gender, ethnicity, and age for example.