

# One in five brokers has contemplated leaving the industry due to stress

Majority of brokers admit to feeling stressed at work, many feel overwhelmed by work pressures. Workloads, regulation and pressure to hit targets are contributing to mental health issues. Ecclesiastical lifts the lid on the mental health issues facing brokers across the UK.<sup>1</sup>



Our recent research<sup>1</sup> with brokers has revealed one in five brokers has contemplated leaving the industry due to stress. The results show:

- over three quarters of brokers (78%) surveyed admit to feeling stressed at work
- a third suffer from stress at least once a week
- half of brokers say they feel anxious at work.

Brokers regularly feel overwhelmed by work pressures. Worryingly one in five say they have suffered depression related to work.

## Working environment

Heavy workloads combined with tight deadlines and the volume of paperwork brokers deal with are the main causes of stress, with a fifth of brokers also blaming the pressure to hit targets.

The research found that younger brokers are more likely to suffer from stress and also feel the effects more keenly.

Recent figures<sup>2</sup> from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) show that the rate of self-reported work-related stress, depression or anxiety has increased in recent years, with 15.4million working days lost across the UK economy in 2017/18.

## The effects on brokers' health

The most common effects of stress are problems sleeping and relaxing, followed by problems concentrating. As well as the mental health impacts, brokers admit that stress also affects their health and lifestyle with less healthy eating, less exercise and increased alcohol intake.

Talking about mental health at work helps but stressed brokers are most likely to discuss their issues with family and friends, followed by colleagues, before they seek out help from their manager or HR department.

**For broker use only**

## Changing times

While a quarter of brokers feel the industry needs to do more to reduce the stigma of mental health, many broker firms are taking action to promote better mental wellbeing. Almost half of brokers (48%) report their firms are:

- enabling flexible working
- creating a supportive culture which promotes mental wellbeing
- offering advice and guidance, employee support or counselling.

The CII has recently worked in partnership with mental health charity Mind<sup>3</sup>, to set out recommended [standards](#) to improve mental health amongst employees, an outline of their recommended standards include:

1

Produce, implement and communicate a 'mental health at work' plan that encourages good mental health of all staff and an open organisational culture.

2

Develop mental health awareness among employees by making information, tools and support accessible.

3

Encourage open conversations about mental health and the support available when employees are struggling, during the recruitment process and at regular intervals throughout employment, with appropriate workplace adjustments offered to employees who require them.

4

Provide your employees with good working conditions and ensure they have a healthy work-life balance and opportunities for development.

5

Promote effective people management to ensure all employees have a regular conversation about their health and wellbeing with their line manager, supervisor or organisational leader and train, and support line managers in effective management practices.

6

Routinely monitor employee mental health and wellbeing by understanding available data, talking to employees and understanding risk factors.

Adrian Saunders, Commercial Director at Ecclesiastical, said:

“ The stigma of mental health is starting to change as we become more comfortable talking about it as a society and it's encouraging that the brokers who completed our survey felt able to talk about their issues.

One in six<sup>3</sup> of us will be affected by mental ill health of some kind so it's important that businesses create a culture where people are able to talk about it and feel comfortable seeking advice and guidance if they start suffering problems.

There is some good progress being made but it's a worrying statistic that one in five brokers has contemplated leaving the industry due to stress, and this figure is even higher for younger brokers, so clearly more has to be done. ”

## Conclusion

At Ecclesiastical Insurance, we are committed to changing the conversation around mental health and support a number of programmes to promote better mental wellbeing. Mental health training for all managers has recently been rolled out, we have also introduced counselling support, and wellness action plans.

Our research shows that working in broking is stressful in nature, whether it's the heavy workloads combined with tight deadlines and the volume of paperwork. Having a supportive employer and having the opportunity to ask for help if needed can make the difference between keeping or losing employees.

A mental health issue can affect anyone at any time. Start to think about how you can make changes in your work place to create a supportive and open environment.

Further information on how to implement positive mental wellbeing practices can be found in the CII's and Mind's report "[How to implement the Thriving at Work mental health standards in your workplace](https://www.mind.org.uk/media/25263166/how-to-implement-the-thriving-at-work-mental-health-standards-final-guide-online.pdf)".



1 FWD research, Broker Mental Health, 250 UK Business Placing Brokers FWD research

2 Work related stress depression or anxiety statistics in Great Britain, 2018 <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/stress.pdf>

3 CII and Mind <https://www.mind.org.uk/media/25263166/how-to-implement-the-thriving-at-work-mental-health-standards-final-guide-online.pdf>. July 2018

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