IOSH Webinars

Disclaimer: The information and opinions expressed in this presentation are those of the author/presenter and not necessarily those of the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH).

Ergonomics and mental health for agile workers

Financial Services Group

Welcome to the new Financial Services Group

- If you work directly in banking and insurance or deliver claims and loss adjusting services or legal services to support the sector, or if you are working delivering facilities support, offering consultancy services, engineering, repairing motor vehicles etc. We are the group for you, because we all know that financial services covers a wide range of tasks and roles.

- Networking Launch event – 7th September, 18:00, Zurich Offices London (near Fenchurch street station).
  - Invite only
  - If you are interested in attending, please email me on – tony.bough@uk.rsagroup.com

Ergonomics for agile workers

Katharine Metters
Lead Consultant,
Posturite

Ergonomics of Agile working

- Potential Pros and Cons of Agile working
- Agile working Planning
- Risk assessment
- Ergonomics of the different DSE agile working options
- Key body messages
- How to make Agile working work

Agile working-potential

Benefits

- Good use of space

- Flexibility

- Right tools for the job

- Using advantages of IT development

- Reduced travel

- Employee increased control

Drawbacks

- Series of poor postures

- Communication difficulties

- Longer working hours

- Difficult to control

- IT issues

- Lone worker issues

- Different management skills required

Agile working planning

Consider what tasks are undertaken as a series of activities.

For each activity we need to think of the best sort of environment for it to be performed, how can we support the human to work well.

- This will guide:
    - Equipment provision
    - Workspace requirement
    - Locations
    - Communication
    - Advice and controls required

Risk assessment

Once the Agile working has been considered as far as how the role is best achieved we then need to undertake a risk assessment of each role.

Which will probably include these issues:
- Mobile/hots desking DSE
- Lone working
- Manual handling
- Travel and driving
- Work pressures and hours

Agile DSE Questions

- Does the agile worker:
    - Have their own workstation in an office
    - Use hot desking
    - Use cafes or other public spaces
    - Work at home
    - Work in/on transport

- For each element do they:
    - Carry their IT with them
    - Use clients equipment e.g. hot desks/agility work spaces
    - Use company equipment as above
    - Use 3rd party equipment airport terminals etc....

- What is the duration of the activity?

Agile DSE

The fundamentals of the DSE regulations hold but Agile working requires that we go back to basics. The regulations are there to help us manage the risks and prevent discomfort and ill health not just for audit purposes!

Agile working provides opportunities to manage DSE risk better but can also well as to create issues.

The key is choose the right tool/workstation for the task

Ergonomics of Hot desking

Poorly designed Hot desking creates poor postures as the user has to adapt to the workstation. Often people do not want to use it!

Common issues

- Limited adjustment
- Mainly seated or standing
- Poorly maintained
- Uninviting
- Poor acoustics

Solutions

- Easy flexible equipment
- Range of workstations/areas
- Acoustic and privacy considered
- Make the areas attractive
- Good support and management
- Ensure suitable 'breaks' taken
- Make it a desirable environment for collaboration

Ergonomics of Mobile DSE

Poor mobile DSE creates poor postures as the user often strains to see the screen and its either head down, or hand up and gripping!

Common issues

- Head and hand aimed to the same place
- Holding devices
- Lighting
- Used anytime any place

Solutions

- Ensure correct tasks completed on devices
- Provide Bluetooth keyboards and mice
- Consider different input options
- Provide holders for devices to reduce grip
- Advice and education of the right tool for the task for the right time
- Movement!

Ergonomics of Transport DSE

Computer use on trains and airplanes and transport terminals.

IT use in vehicles

Common issues

- Lack of space leading to head down and neck flexion
- Awkward arm, wrist and hand movements
- Sustained holding of devices
- Tension to navigate

Solutions

- Plan to complete suitable tasks, if travelling this is a great time to read and think and make short notes, not to type and edit
- Use a suitable pointing device to aid navigation it will reduce problems and increase productivity
- Consider using voice activated software in the comfort of your own car!
- Car set up and work guidance

DSE at home

Home working or working from home sometimes! A mixed bag!

Common issues

- Poor equipment
- Lack of space
- Sharing space with others
- Lack of planning due to creep

Solutions

- If full time or significant periods at home on DSE then suitable workstation is a must
- Checking workstation suitable for work performed and duration
- Many mobile solutions will work well at home as will be compact
- Advice and education about movement!

Key body messages

Do not look down for extended periods – if your neck muscles are tight or sore you are looking down too much –ask a colleague to take a picture of you working

Make sure you can feel back support, if not you are probably leaning forwards

Check your wrists and hands are relaxed, is there a straight line from elbow to fingers, are there angles at your wrists, is there tension?

Are your feet supported and your hips higher than your knees?

Move more often than your body asks you too

Key body messages

HEDGE'S 3S's IDEAL WORK PATTERN
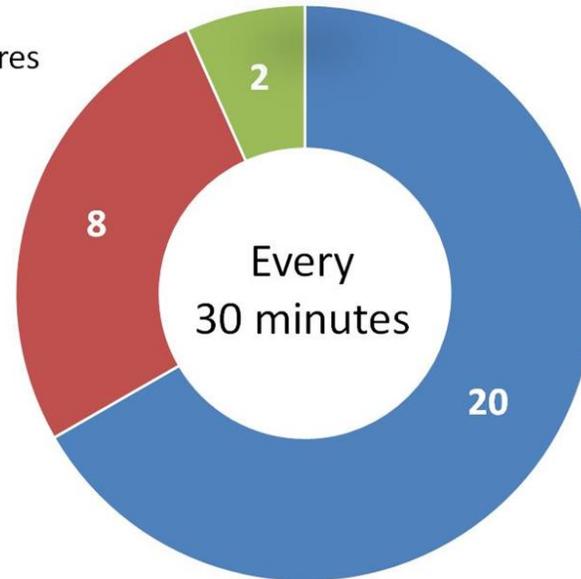
Move and gently stretch

Stand in neutral postures

Sit in neutral postures

2

8

Every 30 minutes

20

For a 7.5 hrs day this gives a total of:
- 5 hours/sitting
- 2 hours of standing
- 0.5 hours of moving
- 16 sit-to-stand transitions

■ Sitting ■ Standing ■ Stretching

(http://ergo.human.cornell.edu/CUESitStandPrograms.html)

Movement and breaks

The worse the position the more movement required

Office work seated, good set up-

Movement and eye breaks every 20mins, bottom off seat each hour

Office work sit stand, good set up

Movement sit to stand every 20mins, stand for 10, short walk each hr. (to printer, glass or water etc.)

Laptop/tablet working, limited input, sitting

Movement and eye breaks every 20mins, bottom off seat each hour

Laptop/tablet working, inputting, sitting

Movement every 10 mins, get up every 20

Small device work (holding device)

Swap and move hands and shoulders, neck at least every 5 mins, change position every 10, break from work at least every 20 mins. Each task change move!

How to make Agile working work

Clarity and openness on the practicalities-
- Information must be clear and easily accessible
- Pragmatic and task focused

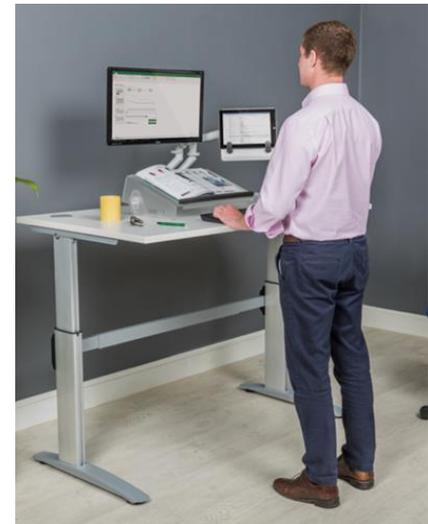Communication must be considered and accessible

Training for Managers

Provide suitable environments for the different tasks and people

Make the areas desirable and flexible

Remember the basics

What is good for the body is good for the eyes and the mind and thus the work!

Mental health for agile workers

Tony Bough
Head of Health, Safety & Wellbeing,
RSA

Mental health

- Working from home may seem ideal to some people. No need to get dressed or leave the comfort of your home, what could be better?

- The reality is that many people that work from home, remotely or in an agile manner find themselves just as stressed as anyone else.

- Agile working can lead to working really long hours with few breaks.

- Agile workers comments:
  - *"I feel that I have to justify that I'm working"*
  - *"If I don't answer the phone in 3 rings I find myself over explaining what I'm doing"*
  - *"I find myself getting stressed if I miss a call"*
  - *"I work longer hours to show that I'm delivering, I work when I would have commuted and then a bit more as well"*
  - *"Bouncing between locations brings plenty of hours at work"*

Time

- Some agile workers feel that they have to work harder to prove that their job is both viable and worthwhile.

- Outlook Calendar to schedule your appointments and work plans, and open and shut times!

- Leader led Toolbox talk type sessions – covering time management, and how to use Outlook. Advising the use of in/out of work hours. Also YouTube links re: outlook, Lync etc.

- Dedicated workspace to reduce distractions.

- Longer days and also shorter days!

- Learn to say no or to ask for different meeting times.

- Technology to reduce travel.

Exercise

- People who work from home do not have to walk to their cars or from their cars to work or to catch the bus or the train or even walk around the workplace. Lets not forget that exercise helps with mental health resilience!
  - Time Management. Have a lunch break!
  - Ergonomics – already covered.
  - Intranet (information)
  - Wellbeing events (www.worldwalking.org)
    - Exercise & it's inclusive
    - Competition as motivation
  - Promoted freely available resources, e.g. http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Pages/Activelifestyle.aspx#mums etc.

Related apps

The 7 minute workout

The 7 minute workout

Pedometer app

Pedometer app

Couch to 5k

Couch to 5K

Google Fit

Apple Health

Related links

NHS couch to 5K

Get going with Change 4 Life

Get into cycling

Plot your walking route with plotaroute

Eating out

- You may find yourself picking at food or grazing rather than eating proper meals.

  - Dealing with the Stress of Agile working - guidance
  - Intranet (information)
  - Wellbeing challenges open to all
    - Eat a healthy meal and think about what you eat during the week, make one yourself using our links to recipes
    - Stop the pop, stop the coffee, stop the tea, and stop drinking anything except water. For one day. There are lots of reasons why it helps your health, and it's only for one day.
  - Promoted through an agile workers forum

Healthy Eating recipe's

BBC Good Food

TESCO Healthy Eating

Morrisons Healthy Eating

Iceland Healthy Eating

ASDA Healthy Eating

Aldi Healthy Eating

Lidl Healthy Eating

Sainsbury's Healthy Eating

10 top apps for eating healthy

Staying connected

- Isolation can lead to feeling of stress. You miss the water cooler conversations and the social elements of work.

  - Yes it's important to disconnect from technology, but
  - Technology can also empower communication & engagement.
  - Agile workers forum – face to face and dial-in/virtual.
  - Reduce the feeling of isolation.
  - Reduce travel requirements through technology?
  - Create social opportunities.
  - Technology – Accident reporting, DSE assessments, PAT, risk assessments etc.

Leader led

- Leadership matters. Your perception of your Leader is your perception of your employers expectations. Can a Leader inspire a remote or Agile worker?

    - Training (company specific, MHFA)
    - Induction
    - Setting clear goals
    - Appraisals
    - Empowering time management
    - Weekly calls
    - One-to-one's (monthly)
    - Adapting communication styles to the individual.
    - Wellness action plan

Absence

- We want to be proactive in this session but lets briefly mention absence

- Leaders need to be trained and enabled:
    - You can discuss behaviours in the workplace that give cause for concern
    - Issues that affect performance in the workplace
    - There is no general duty to "be nice/charitable". The objective is to identify with the employee what support they need to be productive
    - Do not attempt to diagnose, treat or counsel the employee

Absence – create conversations

Questions to ask

- How are you doing at the moment?

- You seem to be a bit down/upset/under pressure/frustrated/angry, Is everything ok?

- I've noticed the reports are late when they usually are not. Is everything ok?

- Is there anything I can do to help?

- What would you like to happen? How?

- What support do you think might help?

- Have you spoken to your GP or looked for help anywhere else?

Questions to avoid

- You're clearly struggling. What's up?

- Why can't you just get your act together?

- What do you expect me to do about it?

- Your performance is really unacceptable right now – what's going on?

- Everyone else is in the same boat and they're ok. Why aren't you?

- Who do you expect to pick up all the work you can't manage?

Personal security

- Agile working is not all about homeworking. It's also about travel

  - Travel vs time management
  - Let them make decisions – be realistic
  - Information
  - Video's – eyes wide open, stay safe firearms & weapons attack.
 - Leaders aware of movements and locations.
  - Emergency procedures.

Before you travel there are common sense things that you can consider, here are the experts top 10 tips

- ▸ 1. Invent a code word and shout it to help find your family members.
- ▸ 2. Have a torch app on your phone to help you see in the event of an attack.
- ▸ 3. Wear appropriate shoes, particularly on the way to work and when using public transport.
- ▸ 4. Carry a door wedge to keep an assailant out in the event of a Paris-style attack.
- ▸ 5. Emergency SMS
- ▸ 6. Be aware of your surroundings.
- ▸ 7. Check the government website for advice on countries to avoid when travelling.
- ▸ 8. Read people.
- ▸ 9. Report anything suspicious using the anti-terrorist hotline.
- ▸ 10. Keep your phone fully charged.

To summarise
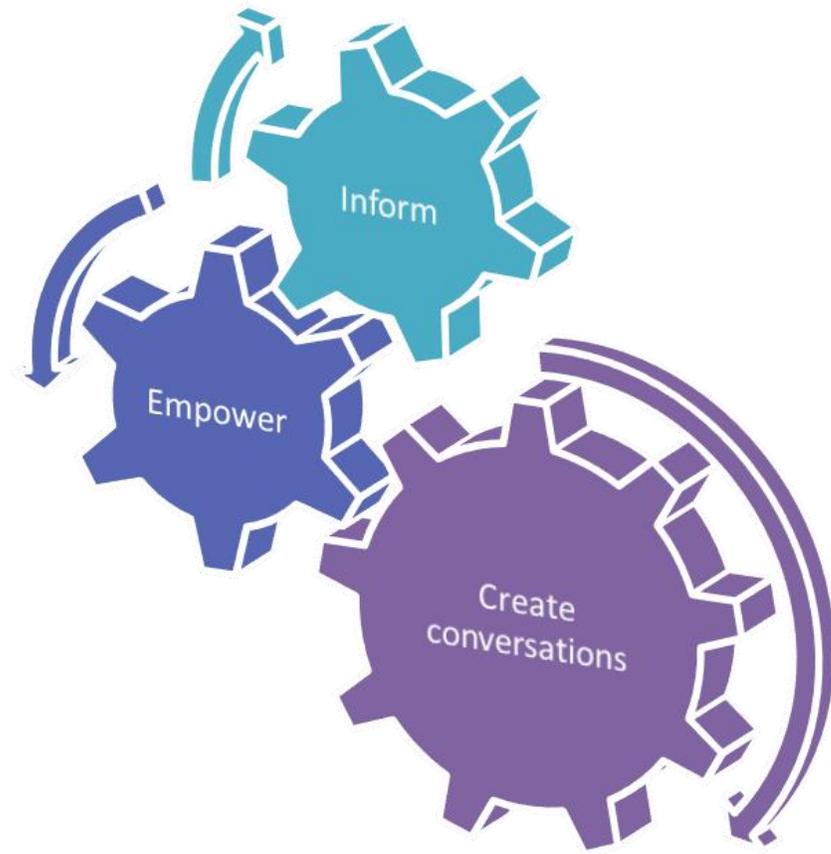
Elsewhere

Event: Managing remote workers
Date: Thursday 06 July 2017
Time: 18.00–21.00
Venue: Kingston Business School, Kingston Hill campus, Kingston Hill,
  Kingston upon Thames, Surrey

- The evening will explore the organisational structures and management behaviours that can best support remote workers and promote their wellbeing.

- Agenda and registration http://www.kingston.ac.uk/events/item/2671/06-jul-2017-managing-remote-workers/

Research on distributed workers, sponsored by the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) and led by UEA Norwich Business School in association with Affinity Health at Work will also be shared.