

## The impact of the type 2 diabetes epidemic on business performance, growth and sustainability

Five million people in the UK have diabetes – that's 1 in 12 working-age people. Around 90-95% of people with diabetes have type 2 diabetes, a largely preventable condition. Type 2 diabetes is a national epidemic having increased 60% in the last decade. By 2030, 1 in 10 working-age people will have diabetes and by 2045, it will be 1 in 8. More young people are now developing type 2 diabetes.

As an environmental condition, workplace factors, including access to healthy food, activity levels, stress and shift patterns, can significantly contribute to developing diabetes, and for people with diabetes, their ability to manage the condition effectively and prevent complications. For every 1,000 employees:

- 82 employees have diabetes
- 19 employees have undiagnosed diabetes, increasing the likelihood of complications and poor health outcomes
- 350 employees have 'pre-diabetes'

### Top 5 business risks of diabetes

- 1. Hypos and hypers can cause significant safety incidents.** Hypos and hypers can impair balance, coordination and concentration. Severe hypos can cause seizures and loss of consciousness. For every 1,000 employees there will be an estimated 1-3 severe hypos happening in the workplace per month. 45% of employees said they would not know what to do if a colleague was experiencing a hypo or would only know general first aid principles. Not managing diabetes effectively can make you 30% more likely to have an accident than drivers without diabetes.
- 2. Hypos and hypers reduce worker productivity.** Employees with diabetes are estimated to be absent from work an additional 2-10 days per year compared to employees without diabetes at a total cost of around £1 billion. The cost of presenteeism (reduced output at work) is significantly greater at £3-4 billion. In the workplace, mild-moderate hypos alone result in 104 hours lost productivity per 1,000 employees per month, or £1,800 per month at average earnings.
- 3. Workplace practices may directly contribute to diabetes and diabetes complications in employees.** An estimated 75% of employees with diabetes may be acting against their healthcare provider's recommendations to maintain productivity at work, risking their long-term health and employability. Only 48% of people with diabetes attend their regular diabetes checks, with lack of ability to take time off work frequently cited as a contributing factor. 63% of employees with diabetes describe their line manager as unhelpful or unsupportive of their diabetes.
- 4. Diabetes leads to early workforce exit and loss of skills.** An estimated 38% employees with diabetes aged 45-64 exit the workforce early due to diabetes complications. In a workforce of 1,000 people, this could be equivalent to losing 14 highly skilled workers in the 45-64 age group each year to diabetes complications.
- 5. Employers are legally required to manage diabetes in the workplace.** Diabetes is a known and foreseeable risk in the workplace. Employers must comply with relevant laws and regulations. Failure to manage diabetes may lead to a criminal conviction and unlimited fine.

## What is Diabetes Safety?

There is a clear business case for employers to ensure a Diabetes Safe workplace. While many employers already provide health, well-being and occupational health support to individuals with or at risk of diabetes, a Diabetes Safe workplace is one that goes further to mitigate the business risks of diabetes, including presenteeism, absenteeism, early workforce exit, safety and regulatory compliance risks.

A Diabetes Safe workplace is one which has taken reasonable and practicable steps to:

### PREVENT

Prevent diabetes in the workforce

### SUPPORT

Support employees with diabetes to manage their condition effectively while at work

### PROTECT

Protect against the business risks (safety, productivity, regulatory compliance) of diabetes

## Becoming a Diabetes Safe workplace

Becoming Diabetes Safe is simple and cost-effective. There are three steps:

1

### STEP 1: SIGN THE TACKLING DIABETES SAFETY CHARTER

Signing the Charter demonstrates leadership and organisational commitment and is important for creating a culture that enables disclosure and support for employees with diabetes.

2

### STEP 2: DO THE SELF-ASSESSMENT

Use the DSO Self-Assessment tool to review current workplace practices, environment, policies and culture against Diabetes Safety criteria. Use the DSO employee survey to collect baseline data of risk in your workplace.

3

### STEP 3: SUPPLEMENT OR ADJUST WORKPLACE PRACTICES AS NECESSARY

Provide your results to DSO for recommendations on how to improve Diabetes Safety in the workplace. DSO can provide management and employee training, awareness and communication materials to support your internal efforts.

**Organisations which meet the Diabetes Safety standards can use the Diabetes Safe quality mark:**



**Contact the Diabetes Safety Organisation to discuss Diabetes Safety in your workplace:**

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