

Suicide, Mental Health and Wellbeing

Welcome to the sixth issue of the Hercules Site Services Ltd Safety, Health, Environment & Quality (SHEQ) eBulletin. Each issue will have a central theme which is relevant to us all in the construction industry.

Suicide in the UK

Suicide is a significant national social issue in the United Kingdom. In 2019 there were 6,507 registered deaths by suicide in the United Kingdom, equating to an average of 18 suicides per day in the country. Suicide is the single biggest killer of men under the age of 45 in the country.



Suicide and suicide attempts can have lasting effects on individuals, their social networks and communities. The causes of suicide are many, and it is important to understand the psychological processes that underlie suicidal thoughts, and the factors that can

lead to feelings of hopelessness or despair.

Suicide behaviours are complex, there is no single explanation of why people die by suicide. Social, psychological, and cultural factors can all interact to lead a person to suicidal thoughts or behaviour. For many people, an attempt may occur after a long period of suicidal thoughts or feelings, while in other cases, it may be more impulsive.

People who take their own life have often told someone that they do not feel their life is worth living anymore. Some people may actually say they want to die. Because of this it is very important to take anybody who talks about suicide seriously and try to make sure they remain safe.



Potential warning signs for suicide:

- Talking or writing about death or suicide
- Financial preparations such as updating a will
- Recent trauma or life crisis
- Talking about feeling hopeless and having no purpose

- Talking about being a burden to others
- Anxious, agitated and acting reckless
- Increased use of alcohol and drugs
- Withdrawing from usual activities and feeling isolated

Covid-19

Multiple lines of evidence indicate that the coronavirus disease 2020 (COVID-19) pandemic has profound psychological and social effects. The psychological sequelae of the pandemic will probably persist for months and years to come. Studies indicate that the COVID-19 pandemic is associated with distress, anxiety, fear of contagion, depression and insomnia in the general population and among healthcare professionals.

Mental health consequences of the COVID-19 crisis including suicidal behaviour are likely to be present for a long time and peak later than the actual pandemic. To reduce suicides during the COVID-19 crisis, it is imperative to decrease stress, anxiety, fears and loneliness in the general population.



Mates in Mind

Mates in Mind is a registered UK charity raising awareness, addressing the stigma of poor mental health and promoting positive mental wellbeing across workplaces. They help to make sense of available options and support employers to address mental health within their workplace. Mates in Mind work across industries, focusing on construction, as well as related sectors including transport, logistics, manufacturing and others. Together we can be the change needed to improve workplace mental health.



Samaritans

Every 7 seconds a SMARITAN answers a call for help. The organisation is working 24/7 for anybody struggling to cope, who needs someone to listen without judgement or pressure. Samaritans work hard towards giving people ways to cope and the skills to be there for others and they encourage, promote and celebrate those moments of connection between people that can save lives.



Suicide in Construction

Construction workers are ending their own lives in rates significantly higher than the already too high national average. Suicide is killing more construction workers than falls on construction sites. Construction is a high pressure, environment, a lot of guys are away from family all week, spending evenings with colleagues and continually drinking alcohol. Job insecurity is also a huge factor. More than 50% of construction workers are self-employed, and at the whim of short-term, insecure project work.

Clocktober



The clocks go back an hour at 02:00 on Sunday 25th October. The time change affects our internal biological clock. It needs to re-synchronise, but this doesn't happen straight away. It usually takes up to three days for our brains and bodies to adjust to the one-hour time shift. This can alter the quality of our sleep, making us more tired during the day.

With the seasonal clock change, now is the time to assess the impact on working conditions onsite of darker evenings and winter weather. We need to reduce risks by planning ahead. During the winter months the number of accidents increases, in and out of work. This particularly affects where plant can

meet pedestrians as well as slips, trips and falls. Reduced daylight can make people more susceptible to being tired. It can affect mental alertness at work and during driving.

The best thing to do to reduce stress and sleepiness during time change periods is to prepare and make time for sleep as well as healthy diet.

Help and resources

www.thecalmzone.net - listening services, information and support for men at risk of suicide.

www.papyrus-uk.org - confidential support for under-35s at risk of suicide and others who are concerned about them.

www.maytree.org.uk - offers free respite stays for people in suicidal crisis.

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19/>

<https://www.constructionindustryhelpline.com/our-app.html>



<https://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk>

<https://www.mind.org.uk>

Employee Assistance Programme

- 0800 0474097

Hercules Dedicated Support Line

- 01793 686223

