

Stress at Work

(Psychiatric Injury)

Many of us experience periods of stress at work from time to time but when might suffering with stress at work mean that there may be a legal claim?

When exposed to high levels of stress over a period of time, there is a risk that this may damage someone's mental health to the extent that medical help and support is required.

All employers have a broad duty of care to those they employ. This duty include a legal obligation to take practical measure to support both the physical and mental health and wellbeing of staff. Where stress is concerned, employers have a duty to assess and manage those risks in the workplace causing the stress once they are made aware of the issues.



Common risks in stress at work claims can include issues to do with:



Workplace Bullying



Excessive workloads to manage



Unfairly applied policies or procedures



Having mental health issues ignored

In a stress at work claim, compensation is pursued in the County Courts against an employer who has failed in their legal duties to keep their employee mentally safe at work despite being aware that there were risks present causing harm to that employee's health.

Compensation includes damages for the mental health injury (personal injury) in itself, together with any financial losses such as lost earnings or therapy costs.

Here at Oakwood Solicitors, we have a specialist team of mental health trained lawyers happy to provide a free assessment of any potential stress at work claim.



Meet the team

Oakwood Solicitors has a specialist team of dedicated Psychiatric Injury Lawyers. Please see below a snapshot of three of their profiles.



Jessica Rowson

Director and Head of Psychiatric Injury

Jessica started as a Paralegal at Oakwood Solicitors in July 2010, qualifying as a Solicitor in September 2013. Following her qualifying as a Solicitor, Jessica established a niche department dealing primarily with Stress at Work claims.

She was promoted to Assistant Head of Department in 2014 and took over as Head of Department in 2016, where she broadened the scope of the department to cover a wider range of claims focused on Psychiatric Injury. In December 2017, Jessica was promoted to Director following over seven years of service and dedication to the firm.

In 2018 she obtained a TQUK Level 2 Certificate in awareness of Mental Health Problems and is also a qualified Mental Health First Aider.

Jessica also recently contributed her expertise to a BBC documentary – which highlighted daily workplace interactions and asked whether the behaviours displayed could be deemed as sexual harassment.





Emma Piorkowska

Assistant Head & Solicitor in Psychiatric Injury

Emma joined Oakwood Solicitors in October 2009 and qualified as a Solicitor in September 2013. Emma works in our Psychiatric Injury department, specialising in Work-Related Stress claims. She is fully committed to providing her clients with straightforward, practical advice.

Emma has extensive experience in Personal Injury, Civil Litigation, Employment Disputes and Civil Discrimination claims.



Kaye Barnard

Solicitor in Psychiatric Injury

Kaye has worked for over ten years within the legal industry, gaining extensive experience in both Civil Litigation and Personal Injury claims of varying complexity. She completed her training and qualified as a Solicitor in November 2012.

Kaye joined Oakwood Solicitors in June 2015 as a Solicitor in the Psychiatric Injury Department and now specialises in Personal Injury claims arising as a result of work-related stress.

Her years of experience mean Kaye is confident in all aspects of the claims process – from outset to conclusion, be this through negotiation or litigation. Kaye is committed to achieving positive results for her clients, whilst also providing support and empathy throughout the claims process.

