

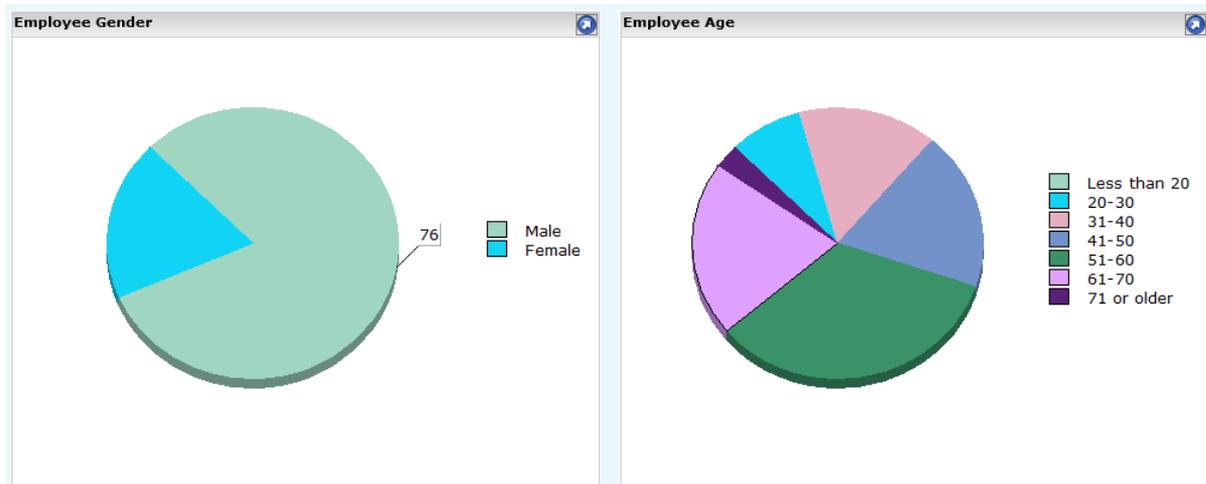


Suicide Awareness hits home at Heraeus

Employer: Heraeus Quartz UK Ltd

Area: North Tyneside

Theme: Suicide Awareness



Heraeus is a quartz manufacturing site in Wallsend. There are around 108 Heraeus Employees with around another 40 people made up of agency workers and contractors. The site has been in Wallsend since 1906. Quartz glass is a technical glass product which is used to produce fibre optic cable for the internet and is extensively used in the tools which manufacture semiconductors. Two type of quartz are produced on site – natural quartz and synthetic, both are furnace operations. We have a predominately male workforce which is also an ageing workforce.

The company has been participating in the Better Health at Work Award since 2015, the year that we gained our Bronze award, followed by Silver in 2016 and Gold in 2018.

Suicide is something that effects many employees either because they have/or feel suicidal or they are coping with family or friends who have these feelings or have been successful in taking their own life. The majority of employees do not share or talk about the issue and the problems that it can create just being at work for them.

Part of the continuing excellence award is to raise suicide awareness and as part of Better Health at Work month the company offered training via a video training link from The Zero Suicide Alliance provided by Maureen Turner.

Due to the sensitive nature of the topic rather than provide the whole workforce with a link HR offered the employees the opportunity to request the link to the training. Due to the number of employees asking for the training a link was added to the public drive where all our Better Health at Work information can be accessed by employees.



Working in HR I knew that there are employees coping day to day with this issue but due to the confidential nature of HR I can't always share the problems employees face. Our workforce is growing, and I am aware of more people affected by the problem.

The main reason for the training was to prevent suicide but also to raise awareness among employees and managers.

15% of our workforce took up the offer of the training.

This has been one of our most measurable campaigns as the request had to be made for the training. It has been one of the most successful. The nature of the training and some of the advice offered in the training was not what was expected, so this also meant employees started talking about it. Many people shared with me why they were requesting the training and how they had been affected.

Some feedback was as follows:

“Some parts about the incorrect things to say where informative but found most of it very daunting and sombre”

“I've done the training tonight and have found it useful it gives some good advice and points you to places/people who could help you or others in situations where people may be thinking of harming themselves. #seesaysignpost “

“I have watched the video that you have sent. I appreciate you taking the time to send it through. With going through this quite a lot over the past few years with my partner I have learnt how to pick up on a lot of the things that were mentioned in the video. It was only a few month ago that xxx last tried taking xxx own life so things a still a bit raw. Especially talking about it and one of my friends took xxx own life just 4 weeks ago. Having felt down and that low myself a few year ago I can be a good help to anyone and have been on numerous occasions. I found the chat on the video which involves situations helpful.”

“I've just completed the training video you sent. It's very sobering, but I did find it very helpful and did provide a lot of hints and tips about speaking to various types of people who are thinking about suicide. So overall I do think it is both useful and informative”

