

Stress Awareness Week 2025: Time to act on work-related stress

Work-related stress remains one of the biggest causes of ill health in the workplace. As Stress Awareness Week 2025 begins, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is reminding employers that preventing work-related stress is a legal duty – not just a nice-to-have.

In 2023/24, HSE statistics show that 776,000 workers reported suffering from work-related stress, depression or anxiety. This accounted for nearly half of all self-reported work-related ill health and led to an estimated 16.4 million working days lost over the same period.

Failing to manage stress effectively can also result in reduced productivity and higher staff turnover.

Stress risk assessments – it's the law

Some employers may not be aware that they must [assess and manage the risks of work-related stress](#) in the same way as other health and safety risks.

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, employers must assess risks and take reasonably practicable steps to prevent harm – including from stress.

It's not just about responding when problems arise. It's about taking proactive steps to understand the pressures your employees face and acting on what you find.

Free tools and support from HSE

HSE's [Working Minds campaign](#) makes it easier for employers to take action. It's based on five simple steps – the 5 Rs:

1. Reach out – start the conversation
2. Recognise – spot the signs and causes of stress
3. Respond – agree actions and make changes
4. Reflect – review what's working and what isn't
5. Make it Routine – embed wellbeing into everyday practices

A key resource is HSE's [Talking Toolkit](#), which helps employers hold structured conversations around six key stress factors: Demands, Control, Support, Relationships, Role and Change.

“Prevention is better than cure,” says Kayleigh Roberts, HSE's Work-Related Stress Policy Lead. “By acting proactively, employers can better protect employee wellbeing, reduce sickness absence and retain skilled, experienced staff.”

What employers can do this week

- Review your [stress risk assessment](#) – is it current and relevant to how your teams are working now?
- Use the [Talking Toolkit](#) – open up discussions around workload, pressures and support.
- Encourage learning – signpost the free Working Minds [online learning modules](#) for managers.
- Watch for early signs – like increased absence, reduced performance, or conflict – and act early.
- Normalise these conversations – treat them as part of your routine health and safety management.

Taking simple, reasonable steps not only protects your employees – it helps you meet your legal obligations and build a healthier, more resilient workforce.

Share the message

Help spread awareness during Stress Awareness Week:

- Share Working Minds [posters and graphics](#) with your teams
- Talk about stress at team meetings and one-to-ones
- Encourage others to try the [free online learning](#)
- Use the [Stress Indicator Tool](#) to gather anonymous team feedback

Our campaign partner [Mind](#) shared the following reflection for Stress Awareness Week:

“Life can feel challenging for many of us, both in and outside of work. That’s why it’s so important that work doesn’t add to the pressure. As a proud Working Minds partner, Mind is supporting employers and workers to prevent work-related stress and create mentally healthy workplaces.” – Jonathan Stuart, Workplace Partnerships Lead at Mind

Join the conversation

Follow and share the Working Minds campaign:

- [LinkedIn](#)
 - [Facebook](#)
 - [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#)
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Construction firm fined after worker fell from barn roof

- Man fell from height while installing roof sheeting to barn.
- Work at height was not properly planned.
- HSE has guidance on working at height.

A construction company has been fined after a worker fell from the roof of a partially constructed barn in Shropshire. The man had been appointed by Dewi Williams Limited to complete the installation of roof sheets onto a barn that was under construction at a site in Oswestry.

On 2 September 2023, he was stood on a roof sheet that he had recently installed, attempting to put the next one in place, when he fell to the ground below. His fall resulted in significant injuries, including fractures to his ribs and skull.



Partially constructed barn in Shropshire worker fell from
An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Dewi Williams Limited failed to properly plan the work and to put in place measures to prevent or protect against a fall from height. Furthermore, company director Dewi Williams was directly involved in the work and had allowed it to be carried out in an unsafe manner. Working at height remains one of the leading causes of workplace injury and death and HSE has detailed guidance on [working safely at height](#). The Work at Height Regulations 2005 require work at height activities to be properly planned, appropriately supervised, and carried out safely.

Dewi Williams Limited of the Lowlands, Crickheath, Oswestry, Shropshire, pleaded guilty to breaches of Regulations 4(1) and 6(3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005 and was fined £15,000 and ordered to pay costs of £2,000.



Partially constructed barn in Shropshire worker fell from
Dewi Williams of the Lowlands, Crickheath, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 8BS, pleaded guilty to the same breaches by virtue of Section 37 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. He was given a 12-month conditional discharge and ordered to pay £1,000 in costs.

HSE Inspector Sara Andrews said: "This case emphasises the importance of properly assessing the risks associated with all work at height activities.

"Suitable control measures should be implemented to minimise the risk of workers falling and suffering injury.

"Had this work been properly planned, and suitable work equipment provided, this incident would not have happened.

The HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Matthew Reynolds and paralegal officer Sarah Thomas.

Further information:

1. [The Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We are dedicated to protecting people and places, and helping everyone lead safer and healthier lives.
2. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
4. Relevant guidance can be found here [Working at height: A brief guide](#).
5. HSE does not pass sentences, set guidelines or collect any fines imposed. Relevant sentencing guidelines must be followed unless the court is satisfied that it would be contrary to the interests of justice to do so. The sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences can be found [here](#).

[Transport company fined £133,000 after employee fell from sugar beet conveyor](#)

A Cambridgeshire logistics business has been fined £133,000 after an employee suffered multiple injuries after falling from a sugar beet conveyor.

The employee was loading sugar beet for transport using a conveyor at Knowles Logistics Limited, on 28 November 2023, when the system became blocked with waste product. They fell after climbing the side of the conveyor to clear the blockage, suffering multiple injuries including several broken ribs, a punctured lung, and liver damage.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the conveyor system became blocked multiple times during a shift. Often these blockages could only be cleared by climbing up the side of the machine and removing the obstruction by hand. There was no safe system of work in place for clearing blockages.



Sugar beet conveyor

HSE guidance states that work at height must be properly planned, appropriately supervised, and carried out safely by competent people. Work at height includes any place where, without precautions, a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury. Further guidance can be found here: [Working at height: A brief guide](#).

Knowles Logistics Limited, of Cambridgeshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £133,000 and ordered to pay £5,438 in costs at Peterborough Magistrates' Court on 24 October 2025.

Following the hearing, HSE Inspector Natalie Prince said:

"Falls from height are one of the biggest causes of workplace fatalities and major injuries. This was a wholly avoidable incident that led to a worker being seriously injured."

This prosecution was brought by HSE Enforcement Lawyer Iain Jordan, supported by Paralegal Officer Atiya Khan.

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[Fine for care home company after failures resulted in resident's death](#)

- Resident, 96, choked on food after being left on her own.
- Care workers did not know about her care plan.
- Company only made improvements following her death.

A care home company has been fined over £1.8 million after a resident choked on a piece of food while consuming her evening meal alone in her room.

Elizabeth Campbell (known as Peggy) was a 96-year-old resident of Cradlehall Care Home in Inverness. She was on a specialist diet of soft, moist and bite-sized food and her care plan stated that she should be closely supervised when eating and drinking.

The Court heard that on 11 June 2022, the unit where Peggy resided was staffed by two agency carers who were responsible for twelve residents. At about 5.45pm, Peggy was served a meal of macaroni and chips while sitting up in bed.

One of the carers left to get a drink to accompany her meal but was then forced to deal with urgent issues with two other residents which required her to call for assistance from another unit. As a result of this disruption the resident was left on her own for up to 20 minutes by the time the carer returned to her room with the drink.

The carer raised the alarm, and other staff came to assist. A paramedic arrived shortly afterwards and the woman was pronounced dead.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) concluded that

Peggy's death was caused by the fact the company had failed to ensure that all those working in the home had access to and were familiar with the care plans of its residents and that crucially Peggy had been left unsupervised while eating. Following the investigation, HSE took action against the company, with improvements later being made to ensure there was a 'skills mix' during shifts – ensuring any agency staff were always assisted by regular employees, who were more aware of the needs of the home's residents.

HC-One Limited, who run the care home, pleaded guilty to failings under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company was fined £1.8 million at Inverness Sheriff Court on 20 October 2025.

HSE inspector Michelle Gillies said: "This incident was completely preventable had the company taken steps to ensure all of those working at the home knew about the needs of its residents.

"While no blame has been placed on any individual, the company's failures in this case caused Peggy's death.

"Sadly, this isn't the first resident choking case HSE has had to investigate and we implore care homes companies to do all they can to protect their residents.

"Our thoughts remain with her family."

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[Company fined after worker entangled in horizontal borer](#)

A company has been sentenced after an employee became entangled in a horizontal borer while carrying out cleaning operations.

Newcastle Magistrates' Court heard how, on 30 November 2023, while cleaning swarf from a horizontal borer, an employee became entangled around the rotating tool piece, which had been left running.



The horizontal borer machine the employee became entangled in

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the company failed to ensure appropriate guarding was in place on the machine, and that no safe system of work existed for its operation. Furthermore, a lack of effective auditing of daily check sheets meant a removed trip probe went unnoticed.

The employee sustained significant injuries to his legs and ankles, multiple broken ribs, and a collapsed lung on the left-hand side, requiring skin grafts as well as the partial amputation of two toes.

This incident followed previous HSE action at the site, during which guarding of machinery was identified as an issue requiring action by Site and Field Services Limited.

Site and Field Services Limited, of Freeman Way, North Seaton Industrial Estate, Ashington, Northumberland, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £40,000 and ordered to pay £6,382 in costs at Newcastle Magistrates' Court.

Following the hearing, HSE inspector Darian Dundas said:

“Effective monitoring, auditing and review of guarding is essential to demonstrate that it is effective in controlling risk.”

This prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Arfaq Nabi and supported by Paralegal Officer Stephen Grabe.

Further information:

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5. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found here: [Safe use of horizontal boring machines](#)