[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

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