



Facts about Stress

What is stress?

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines work-related stress as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them at work.”

Pressure can be motivating and useful. Stress occurs when demands become excessive or prolonged and a person feels unable to cope. Stress can affect both mental and physical health.

Work-related stress, depression or anxiety in Great Britain - 2024/25

964,000	409,000	22.1 million
workers suffering from work-related stress, depression or anxiety	new cases in 2024/25	working days lost

In 2024/25, work-related stress, depression or anxiety accounted for 52% of all work-related ill health and 62% of all working days lost due to work-related ill health. The average was 22.9 days lost per case.

Source: HSE, Work-related stress, depression or anxiety statistics in Great Britain, 2025.



Where are rates highest?

Over the three-year period 2022/23-2024/25, HSE reported significantly higher-than-average rates in:

- ◆ Public administration and defence - 3,470 cases per 100,000 workers
- ◆ Human health and social work - 2,830 per 100,000
- ◆ Education - 2,620 per 100,000
- ◆ All industries average - 2,040 per 100,000

What the latest figures tell us

- ◆ The 2024/25 prevalence rate was 2,770 cases per 100,000 workers, and was significantly higher than the previous year.
- ◆ The latest three annual rates are higher than the 2018/19 pre-coronavirus level.
- ◆ HSE identifies workload pressures - including tight deadlines, too much work and too much responsibility - as major reported causes. Lack of managerial support, workplace change, bullying or violence and uncertainty about roles are also identified factors.

Stress is not the same as pressure

We all experience pressure. Short-term pressure can help us focus and perform. Stress is different: it is the harmful reaction that can develop when pressure becomes excessive, prolonged or difficult to manage.

A single “fight or flight” response is a normal protective reaction. Problems are more likely when the body is repeatedly activated and does not get enough opportunity to recover.

What can help?

- ◆ Notice early warning signs in yourself and others.
- ◆ Talk about pressures before they become overwhelming.
- ◆ Review workload, control, support, relationships, role and change at work.
- ◆ Seek professional or medical advice if stress is persistent, severe or affecting your health.

Always consult your GP or another appropriate health professional if you are concerned about your health.