Health and Work
Spotlight on Mental Health

Almost 1 in 6 people of working age have a diagnosable mental health condition.

Mental health conditions are a leading cause of sickness absence in the UK.

OVER 15m days were lost to stress, depression and anxiety’ in 2014 – an increase of 24% since 2009.

In 2016, 42.7% employment rate for those who report mental illness as their main health problem (Mental illness, phobia, panics, nervous disorders (including depression, bad nerves or anxiety).

Work can be a cause of stress and common mental health problems: in 2014/15 9.9m days were lost to work-related stress, depression or anxiety.

In 2015, some 48% of Employment and Support Allowance recipients had a ‘Mental or Behavioural disorder’ as their primary condition.

Each year mental ill-health costs the economy an estimated £70bn through lost productivity, social benefits and health care.

Of people with physical long term conditions, 1 in 3 also have mental illness, most often depression or anxiety.

In 2014 – an increase of 24% since 2009.

long-term sickness absence in England attributed to mental ill health.

An unhealthy workforce hurts the UK's economy and society due to lost productivity, reducing in income tax receipts, increases in long-term sickness and increased healthcare costs. Better management of employee health can minimise these costs.

The costs to the taxpayer—benefit costs, additional health costs and forgone taxes—are estimated to be

The combined costs of sickness absence, lost productivity through worklessness, and health-related productivity losses, are estimated to be over £100bn annually. This is greater than the current annual budget for the NHS and equivalent to the entire GDP of Portugal.

Sources: Black, 2008
Over half of people with a long-term condition say their health is a barrier to the type or amount of work they can do, rising to over 80% when someone has three or more conditions.

**Socio-economic factors**

**Long-term conditions and limiting long-term conditions**
- More prevalent in older people
  - 16 to 24: 15%
  - 25 to 44: 21%
  - 45 to 64: 42%
  - 65 to 74: 57%
  - 75 and over: 69%

Long-term conditions are associated with social class and type of occupation.
- People in the poorest communities have a 60% higher prevalence of long-term conditions than those in the richest.

Employees from unskilled occupations (52%) experience long-term conditions more than groups from professional occupations (33%).

**Future**

In the coming years the workforce is projected to get older.
- 2016: 39
- 2030: 43
- Average age: 43

By 2030 40% of the working age population will have a long-term condition.

Health and Work

Health of UK employees

1 in 4 of UK employees reported having a physical health condition.

1 in 5 of those employees with physical health conditions, also reported having a mental health condition.

1 in 3 of current UK employees have a long-term health condition.

1 in 8 of current employees reported having a mental health condition.

1 in 10 employees reported having musculoskeletal conditions.

42% of employees with a health condition felt their condition affected their work ‘a great deal’ or ‘to some extent’.

Employees with mental and physical health comorbidity were much more likely to see their health as affecting work:

- 29% were affected ‘a great deal’ compared to
- 13% of those with a physical condition only and
- 15% of those with a mental health condition only.

Health and Work

Spotlight on musculoskeletal conditions (MSK)

In 2013, more days of sickness absence were attributed to back, neck and muscle pain than any other cause.

In 2013, 30.6m days of sickness absence could be attributed to MSK

30.6m days of sickness absence

23% of all working days lost

33% of English long-term sickness absence is attributed to MSK

In 2015, 13% of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) recipients reported MSK as their main condition

An estimated 9.5m working days were lost due to work related MSK, an average of 17 days lost for each case. This represents 40% of all days lost due to work related ill-health in 2014/15. Agriculture; construction; health and social care; and transportation and storage industries all show elevated rates of MSK.

In 2010, ESA claimants with MSK were more likely than those with other conditions, to attribute their health conditions to work – 36% related it to work.

1 in 8 of the working age population reported having an MSK

The prevalence of MSK in the workforce is likely to increase

6.5m in 2008

7m in 2030

Employment rate for people who report MSK as their main health condition is 59.7%

131m working days are lost to sickness absence every year.

4.4 days are lost on average for each worker due to sickness absence.

42% of employees experience at least one period of sickness absence in a year.

7% of employees take periods of sickness absence lasting 2 weeks or more.

Main causes for lost working days in 2013:

- Musculoskeletal conditions: 31m days
- Minor illnesses (coughs and colds): 27m days
- Stress, anxiety or depression: 15m days

Costs of presenteeism (attending work while ill) are estimated to be £30bn annually.

Employers spend £9bn each year on sick pay and associated costs.

1 in 3 of employees with a long-term health condition have not discussed it with their employer.

52% of employees report having access to occupational health through their work.

39% report having access to independent counselling.

Percentage of hours lost to sickness in 2013:

- Private sector: 1.8%
- Public sector: 2.9%

SMEs (between 0 and 249 employees) represent a very large proportion of UK workplaces. In 2015, 99.9% of all UK private sector businesses were SMEs.

They employ 15.6m people, accounting for 60% of private sector employment.

95% of people who move from economic inactivity into work in the private sector start their own business or work for a SME.

Sickness absence is lower in smaller businesses.

- % of working hours lost to sickness, by number of employees:
  - 2.3% Between 25-500 employees
  - 1.7% < 25 employees

Similar when self-reported:
- % that reported no absence in a year:
  - 61% Employees in small business (1-49)
  - 56% Large firm employees

Employees in micro businesses (<10 employees) are twice as likely to leave work and move onto Employment Support Allowance without a period of sickness absence than those in larger businesses, suggesting that micro businesses and their employees can find managing ill-health challenging.

Only 21% of employees of small businesses (<50 employees) reporting access to occupational health, and only 12% reporting access to Employee Assistance Programmes.
Health and Work

Unemployment and economic inactivity

In March 2016, there were
31 million people aged 16+ in work

74% 16-64 employment rate

5% unemployment

22% economically inactive

Having a long-term condition is associated with unemployment and worklessness with an employment rate of only 60%

Unemployed people were more than twice as likely as employed people to report having a limiting long term condition

17% unemployed

9% employed

Among working age people, those who are economically inactive have the highest prevalence of long term conditions (42%) and limiting long term conditions (31%) even when accounting for age and income.

Unemployed people are defined as those who are not working, but are looking for work.

Economic inactivity: people not in employment who have not been seeking work within the last 4 weeks and/or are unable to start work within the next 2 weeks.

In 2016, 6% of working age adults are on Employment Support Allowance/ incapacity benefits

The annual State spend on health-related benefits

£13bn

Annual cost to the State of the average claimant receiving Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

£8,500

Each year, approximately

330,000 people

flow from work on to the State’s main health-related benefit, ESA

Around

140,000 people a year

fall out of work and claim health related benefits without having a period of sick leave beforehand

Summary of ESA claimants by condition (August 2015)

- 48% Mental and behavioural disorders
- 13% Diseases of the musculoskeletal conditions and connective tissue
- 6% Diseases of the nervous system
- 6% Diseases of the circulatory and respiratory system
- 5% Injury, poisoning and other external causes
- 12% Other

2 in 3 are male

Over

1 in 3 are over 50 years of age
There is considerable variation in health and health-related employment outcomes across the UK.

Unemployment rates:
- North East: 7.7%
- South West and South East: 3.8%
- England average: 5.1%

Percentage of working age population claiming Employment Support Allowance:
- Liverpool city region: 10%
- Greater Manchester: 7.9%
- Cheshire and Warrington: 5.2%
- England average: 5.6%

Gap in employment rate for individuals with a long term health condition:
- Liverpool: 21.2% points
- Rutland: -8.4% points
- England average: 8.6% points

Percentage of employees who had at least one day off in the previous week:
- Kingston upon Thames: 4.3%
- Harrow: 0.6%
- England average: 2.4%

Percentage of working days lost to sickness:
- Yorkshire and the Humber (both): 1.8%
- London: 1.2%
- England average: 1.5%

Whenever an out-of-work claimant moves into a job at the Living Wage, the local economy benefits on average by £14,436 annually.

By 2020, it is estimated that 1 in 3 British workers will be over the age of 50 years.

Older people are more likely to experience longer periods of unemployment. 47% of unemployed 50-64 year olds have been out of work for a year or more, compared to 40% of unemployed 25-49 year olds, and only 33% of unemployed 18-24 year olds.

Of the 7.2m people aged 50-64 who are employed, 42% are living with a health condition or disability.

Among those aged over 50 even a short period of unemployment increases the risk of mortality and a heart attack as much as smoking.

Each year, 330,000 people move from work onto Employment Support Allowance. 1 in 3 are over 50 years old.

Long term absentee employees

46% of long term absentee employees in England are aged 50 or over, as compared to 27% of the employee population overall.

By 2020, it is estimated that 1 in 3 British workers will be over the age of 50 years.

People with a disability and those aged 50 and over are less successful in getting a job through the Work Programme.

Economic inactivity rate vs Unemployment rate

- 50-64 year-olds: 29% vs 5%
- 25-49 year-olds: 14% vs 6%

For those who are not working when asked why:

- 12% of 50-64 year olds are retired
- 10% say they are not looking for work due to sickness or disability
- 4% say they are looking after the home or family

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Health and Work
Young people and health at work

About half of mental health conditions begin before the age of 14.

Young people with disabilities account for 7% of the 16-24 population and 16% of the total NEET (not in education, employment or training) group.

The employment rate gap between people with and without disabilities widens after education:
- 27.8 percentage points at the age of 23
- 36.2 percentage points at the age of 24

Among 16 to 24 year olds with work-limiting disabilities, the unemployment rate is 24%.

For young people without such disabilities, it is 14%.

In a study reporting on how young people’s chronic conditions can affect their ability to prepare for and seek employment:
- 54% reporting having to delay their education or training, while
- 63% reported that their condition prevented them from reaching their full educational potential.

Chronic health conditions also lead young people at school age to review their career plans:
- 93% indicated that their chronic condition had an impact on their self-confidence, leading them to believe that certain careers were not viable.

Education
The percentage of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A* to C:
- 88.9% students without Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- 59.2% students with SEN without a statement
- 24.9% students with SEN with a statement

Post-19 Education
Disabled people are around 3 times as likely not to hold any qualifications compared to non-disabled people, and around half as likely to hold a degree-level qualification:
- % of people who do not hold any formal qualification:
  - 19.2% working age disabled people
  - 6.5% working age non-disabled people
- % of people who hold degree-level qualifications:
  - 14.9% working age disabled people
  - 28.1% working age non-disabled people

Sources: Kessler et al 2005; Labour Force Survey, 2011 & 2012; Bevan et al., 2013; National Pupil Database academic years 2005/06 to 2010/11
### Alcohol

- **17m** working days lost annually through absences caused by alcohol
- **£7bn** Estimated costs in lost productivity through unemployment related to alcohol
- **72%** of people entering treatment for alcohol problems were not in paid employment at the start of their treatment
- **50k+** individuals in Great Britain in 2013 were claiming incapacity benefits with a primary disabling condition of alcohol misuse

### Drugs

- **£136bn** in lost productivity through unemployment and sickness related to drugs
- **84%** of individuals seeking treatment in England for drug problems were not in paid employment at the start of their treatment
- **34k+** individuals claiming incapacity benefits had a primary disabling condition of drugs misuse
- **Employment and volunteering leads to better treatment outcomes, and reduced relapse rates**

### Smoking

- **Smoking affects organisational productivity**
  - Smokers take between 1 and 2.7 more sick days off per year than non-smokers
  - Smokers may also take more breaks during the working day

- **£1,522** in unproductive wages every year for the average smoker – costing the average business £1,522
- **Many smokers would welcome the support of their employers in helping to quit**
  - 71% say they would find free information on quitting smoking useful
  - 67% say they would like their employers to promote campaigns like Stoptober and No Smoking Day
  - 78% would like information about their local stop smoking service for support

### Sources


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**Note:** The information provided is based on the data and statistics from the year 2013 and 2014/15.