



Facts about Stress

Stress is:

“That which arises when the pressure placed upon an individual exceeds the capacity of that individual to cope.” CBI

“The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them at work.” HSE

Those pressures may come from a number of different sources, and when their combined effect is overwhelming, stress occurs. This means that stress is not good for you. Stress is an unhealthy state of body or mind or both.

For many years, people have referred to the Flight or Fight response as the stress response. But Flight / Fight is a one-off reaction to a perceived challenge or pressure and as such, is a safety response, ensuring the individual is alerted to possible threats allowing them to take avoiding action.

However, continually being in this state means that the body chemicals associated with Flight / Fight are constantly being stimulated which may create symptoms of ill health of one type or another.

Statistics:

Most official statistics are at least 1 year old and statistics from other sources vary widely.

Here are just a few:

❖ HSE 2012:

In 2011, around 131 million days were lost through absences due to sickness or injury, a fall of around 26 per cent since 1993 where 178 million days were lost (these figures include employees and self-employed, aged 16+, across the whole of the UK). These figures were also reported by the Office of National Statistics 2012.

❖ Labour Force Survey 2010/11:

Show the total number of cases of stress in 2010/11 was 400,000 out of a total of 1,152,000 for all work-related illnesses. This is significantly lower than the number in 2001/02.

The number of new cases of work-related stress has reduced to 211,000 from 233,000 in 2009/10 (change not statistically significant).

The industries that reported the highest rates of work-related stress in the last three years were health, social work, education and public administration.

❖ IOSH 2012:

Findings from the ninth annual NHS staff survey revealed that 30 per cent of NHS staff reported they had experienced stress related to their jobs last year – a rise from 29 per cent in 2010 – while, among ambulance staff, the figure hit 34 per cent.

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❖ **CIPD/Simply Health 2011 Absence Management Report:**

Cost of Absence in the Public Sector is £800 per employee per year Average number of absence days – 9.1
Cost of Absence in the Private Sector is £476 per employee per year Average number of absence days – 6.4
Estimated annual cost to UK business: £13 billion.

Stress has become the most common cause of long-term sickness absence for both manual and non-manual employees, according to the CIPD/Simplyhealth Absence Management survey.

❖ **Aviva 2011:**

Workers have indicated they work 26 million extra hours in the workplace each day, according to new research from Aviva's latest report on health of the workplace. It shows six in ten employees regularly work beyond their contracted hours, putting in an average of 1.5 hours overtime a day. Nearly one in four claim they work an extra 2-3 hours daily. 79% of these hours are unpaid, which means workers are providing around worth £225 million of 'free' hours each day for employers.

❖ **Mind 2011:**

British businesses lose an estimated £26 billion each year in sickness absence and lost productivity. With greater awareness and mental health support, Mind indicate businesses could save one third off these costs - £8 billion a year'.

❖ **Mind 2010:**

Stress has forced one in five workers (19%) to call in sick, yet the vast majority of these (93%) say they have lied to their boss about the real reason for not turning up.

❖ **Axa/PPP/Work Foundation 2010**

Presenteeism (when an employee attends work but is less productive than normal) costs businesses 105 time more than sickness absence.