

Work-related ill-health is costing the UK economy over £400 million a week

1 year ago



Work-related ill-health is costing the UK economy over £415 million a week – according to new [TUC](#) analysis published last week.

The analysis of official statistics shows that the number of days lost due to health conditions – including stress, depression and anxiety – has shot up by a third since 2010.

In 2023 to 2024 (the latest year for which figures are available) 34 million working days were lost to work-related ill-health – compared to 22 million in 2010.

The TUC says the findings – which are published as the Employment Rights Bill returns to parliament – show the “urgent importance” of improving the quality of work in the UK.

In 2022 to 2023 (the latest year for which figures are available) work-related ill-health is estimated to have reduced economic output by £21.6bn.

Boom in insecure work

The TUC says the rise in days lost to work-related ill health has coincided with a huge boom in insecure work.

The union body estimates that over a similar period (2011-2023) the number of people in precarious employment also rocketed by a third to over 4 million.

A separate report out today from the Commission for Healthier Working Lives suggests that poor quality

work can harm employee health.

The report states “Most health conditions develop outside work, but for a significant number of people, work itself is the cause. Persistent insecurity, workplace discrimination and extreme demands take a serious toll on health. In some cases, poor-quality work is even worse for health than being unemployed.”

The TUC says driving up employment standards will help improve staff well-being, health and productivity. It will also ensure that more people with disabilities or health conditions can stay in work.

This view was backed up by [polling](#) last autumn which revealed that:

- Three-quarters (75 per cent) of managers think that strengthened employment rights will improve employee health, compared to just 4 per cent who disagree
- Seven in 10 (74 per cent) believe that strengthening employment rights will improve workforce retention, compared to just 6 per cent who do not.

Employment Rights Bill back in parliament

The government’s Employment Rights Bill will return to parliament this week for its report stage.

The Bill will deliver “common-sense reforms” which bring the UK closer to the European mainstream on workers’ rights, the union body says.

The TUC says the legislation will help to deliver better quality work in every corner of the country by cracking down on insecure work and banning exploitative zero-hours contracts.

TUC general secretary Paul Nowak said:

“Improving the quality of work in Britain is good for workers and our economy.

“Work related ill-health is costing us hundreds of millions each week – that’s billions of pounds down the drain every year.

“That’s why the government’s Employment Rights Bill is so important. Cracking down on exploitative practices like zero-hours contracts and giving people more security will boost workers’ health, well-being and productivity. It will also help more people stay in work.

“We need to turn the corner on Britain’s low-rights, low-pay economic model that has been tested to destruction over the last 14 years.

“Giving working people more control and predictability over their lives will help create a happier, healthier and more robust workforce.”