

Key Facts: Workplace

Headlines

In the UK there are approximately £37m people of working age

Those who are employed spend an estimated 60% of their time at work

Between 150m and 175m working days are lost through sickness absence per annum

99.8% of enterprises in the UK are SMEs and the absolute number of SMEs has risen by 25% between 2003 and 2007

SMEs employ 40% of all employees and generate just under one half of all turnover

Only 34% of organisations have access to occupational health services and this could be as little as 3% for SMEs

Health Costs

5m people of working age (almost 14% of the working age population) have a common mental health disorder; only 2.5% have a severe condition. At any given time 1 in 6 working people will be experiencing problems relating to depression, anxiety or stress

In *Promoting Health at Work* the TUC suggests a strong link between stress and the use of tobacco, recreational drugs and alcohol

It is estimated that between 3 and 5% of the workforce are alcohol-dependent and one-quarter drink heavily

The quality of the workplace and how an individual feels valued affects their health and wellbeing:

- Men with low social support are 60% more likely to suffer from poor mental health than those who report having high social support (this is slightly higher in women)
- Workers in jobs with low control (authority over decisions, use of skills) are twice as likely to suffer from coronary heart disease (CHD) than those with high control
- Workers who experience low levels of reward (esteem, status, career opportunities, income) are on third more likely to suffer CHD than those who feel more highly rewarded

Economic Costs

The annual economic cost of sickness absence and worklessness associated with working-age ill-health is estimated between £103-£129bn with the cost to the taxpayer estimated at between £62 and £76bn. Over one quarter of that cost is due to mental health problems

The costs of absenteeism due to mental health problems amount to £8.4bn

Of the 70m lost days per year due to mental health problems, 10m are due to work conditions

Up to 17m working days are lost each year through alcohol-related absence and misuse at a cost of £6.4bn in lost productivity

Social Costs

Being *in work* and having *good work* has a positive impact on future generations:

- The child of a lone parent who is workless is 3 times more likely to be living in poverty than a child of a lone parent in part-time employment, and 8 times more likely than a lone parent in full-time employment
- Children (aged 5-15) whose parents have never worked are twice as likely to suffer from psychiatric disorders than those with parents in low-skilled jobs and 5 times more likely than those whose parents have a professional occupation