



London
Hazards
Centre

Stress at work rockets – we demand government action

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The London Hazards Centre calls for immediate action by the government's safety police, the Health and Safety Commission (HSC) and Executive (HSE) to reduce the harm being done to people at work by rocketing levels of occupational stress in London and throughout the UK.

The HSE today released their official statistics on health and safety at work and despite reporting a trebling in their estimate of stress, depression and anxiety brought on by work from 1995 to the 2001/2 Bill Callaghan, Chair of the HSC, insisted they had got their approach right and needed to take no more action than they are currently doing.

The London Hazards Centre says that the action they are taking does nothing to reduce stress levels at the workplace. A quick and strong response is necessary. In 1999 the HSC consulted widely asking what should be done about stress at work and the great majority of replies said make new regulations or at least a new Approved Code of Practice. The HSC chose to ignore this consultation and set off on a path of giving weak advice. Advice that UNISON said was "worse than useless" !!!

Now we have even more damning evidence, the London Hazards Centre demands the HSC recommends to Ministers they draw up new regulations on stress and see they are vigorously enforced so the number of people affected is drastically reduced – and quickly.

For further comment please call us at the numbers below.

Further information on page 2.

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Further information:

The HSE today reported they estimated in 1995 there were 90,000 self-reported work-related incidents of stress which have risen to 265,000 in 2001/2. These figures are backed up by trends reported by specialist doctors. HSE do say that they accept the incidence of stress is rising, but they do not think the statistics published today reflect the true picture, which is likely to be a little less than reported, but still rising.

HSE statistics can be accessed via the web at www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/

Bill Callaghan, Chair HSC, today said: "The stress problem has got worse and it is a serious problem."

Recent research commissioned by Investors in People recently found nearly nine out of 10 bosses (89%) still do not regard stress as having a significant negative impact on productivity. Yet over a fifth of employees say stress is the biggest single barrier affecting their output.

The TUC recently reported trade union work related stress injury compensation cases increased twelve fold over the last year, rising from 516 to 6,428.

Eighty-six percent of personnel managers questioned by Industrial Society researchers said they felt stress was a workplace problem, that's nearly 9 out of ten.