

Facts about stress

Stress is an adverse response to what an individual perceives as too much pressure. 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 is not necessarily bad for the individual. It is good to be alerted to possible threats and to prepare to take avoiding action.

However, *continually* being in this state means that the body chemicals associated with Flight/Fight are then constantly being stimulated and the result is ill health of one type or another. **This is stress.**

Due to the difficulty of defining stress, the facts and figures about the topic are hence very varied. Most government statistics are at best 2 years old and other statistics vary widely.

Here are just a few:

- **Stress and chronic ill health in the workplace costs £100bn**
Dame Carole Black, ISMA Conference 2009
- **An estimated 442 000 individuals in Britain, who worked in 2007/08 believed that they were experiencing work-related stress at a level that was making them ill,**
Labour Force Survey Government Stats
- **Estimates indicate that self-reported work-related stress, depression or anxiety accounted for an estimated 13.5 million lost working days in Britain in 2007/08**
Labour Force Survey
- **Direct cost of sickness absence estimated as £635 per person per year.**
CIPD 2008
- **Indirect costs of sickness absence have been measured as twice the direct costs i.e.£1270, making a total of £1905 per employee per year – typically around 9% of payroll costs**
Norwich Union Healthcare
- **In 2008 - for every 80p spent on health promotion and intervention programmes, £4 can be saved due to reduced absenteeism, temporary staff, presenteeism and improved motivation**
The European Network for Workplace Health Promotion
- **The 2007 Psychosocial Working Conditions (PWC) survey indicated that around 13.6% of all working individuals thought their job was very or extremely stressful.**
HSE
- **The annual incidence of work-related mental health problems in Britain in 2007 was approximately 5,750 new cases per year. However, this almost certainly underestimates the true incidence of these conditions in the British workforce.**
HSE
- **According to self-reports, estimated 237 000 people, who worked in 2008, first became aware of work-related stress, depression or anxiety giving an annual incidence rate of 780 cases per 100 000 worker.**
Labour Force Survey