

One in two motor trade workers suffering with mental health and wellbeing

Motor trade organisations have joined forces with the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Working Minds campaign to tackle work-related stress in the motor repair trade ahead of Christmas.

Ben, a charity that supports people who work or have worked in the automotive industry, has revealed one in two workers in the automotive sector have struggled with their mental health and wellbeing in the past 12 months, while 50% of those involved in the industry are likely to have been dealing with stress, worry or anxiety, low mood or depression. Ben has also seen a 190% rise in people using their benefits counselling service and accessing their financial guidance.

HSE, together with Working Minds campaign partners Ben, the National Body Repair Association (NBRA), the commercial Vehicle Body Repair Association (VBRA) and the Independent Garage Association (IGA) are promoting how to prevent work-related stress and support good mental health across the sector.

During the winter months, Ben sees an increase in enquiries and cases as many people tend to spend more time indoors and have less interaction with others, negatively impacting their emotional wellbeing. The charity says enquiries also come from people who are suffering with financial issues as they see an increase in their bills, which can also lead to poor mental health.

Ellen Plumer, Head of Outreach, Health and Wellbeing at Ben, said: "Each year thousands of people come to Ben with mental health issues as their primary concern. From results of latest survey of those in the automotive industry, one in two workers have struggled in the past 12 months. Stress is the most common issue, followed by anxiety and poor sleep.

"Work life balance and high workload are the biggest drivers of workplace stress. If it's not addressed and goes on for a long period of time, it can turn into an issue. We know there is a strong link between money worries and mental health.

"If you're struggling with money, then you're likely to be stressed and anxious. It's really important for employers to understand that all areas of a person's life impacts health and wellbeing. Work is a big part of life so it's important to make people feel like they matter, are heard and feel supported."

The latest figures from HSE show there were an estimated 914,000 cases due to work-related stress, depression, or anxiety for workers in Great Britain in 2021/22. That's an 11% rise from the 822,000 cases in 2020/21. An estimated 17 million working days were also lost to work-related stress, depression or

anxiety in 2021/22, which covers more than half of all working days lost due to work-related ill health across the same period.

Research from the regulator has also found that those who work in motor vehicle repairs, the wholesale and retail trade, had a significantly higher workplace injury rate in 2021/22 compared to most industries. HSE's Working Minds campaign was launched last year and is aimed specifically at supporting small businesses by providing employers and workers with easy to implement advice and tools to help them recognise and respond to the signs and causes of stress and support good mental health in the workplace. The law requires all employers to protect workers from stress at work by doing a risk assessment and acting on it.

There is an economic benefit to employers supporting staff's mental health. Figures from a [Deloitte report](#) show employers can see a return of £5.30 on average for every £1 invested in mental health, while the total annual cost of poor mental health to employers has increased now by 25% since 2019, costing UK bosses up to £56 billion a year.

Liz Goodwill, Head of the Work Related Stress and Mental Health Policy Team at HSE, said: "We're calling on employers in the automotive industry to ensure that recognising and responding to the signs of stress becomes as routine, as managing workplace safety. Bosses in the automotive industry should hold regular catch-ups with workers and their teams."

"Working Minds helps employers to follow 5 simple steps based on risk assessment. They are to **Reach out** and have conversations, **Recognise** the signs and causes of stress, **Respond** to any risks you've identified, **Reflect** on actions you've agreed and taken, and make it **Routine**. It needs to become the norm to talk about stress and how people are feeling and coping at work."

Guidance, risk assessment templates and talking toolkits to help employers spot the signs of work-related stress and prevent issues before they become a problem, can be found through HSE's Working Minds campaign:

<https://workright.campaign.gov.uk/campaigns/working-minds/>

To find out more information about Ben and to access their services visit: <https://ben.org.uk/> or call their helpline on 08081 311 333.

Notes to editors

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise. [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk)
2. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
3. To read more about HSE's Working Minds campaign click here: <https://workright.campaign.gov.uk/campaigns/working-minds/>