

## 9 in 10 employees want bosses to prioritise mental health at work

29 November 2024

A new survey from workplace expert Acas has found that around 9 in 10 employees (89%) think it is important for bosses to prioritise staff mental health at work.

Acas is encouraging employers to talk to their staff to ensure mental wellbeing is supported in the workplace.

Not everyone will show obvious signs of poor mental health. Some possible signs include:

- appearing tired, anxious or withdrawn
- increase in sickness absence or being late to work
- changes in the standard of their work or focus on tasks
- being less interested in tasks they previously enjoyed
- changes in usual behaviour, mood or how the person behaves with the people they work with

Acas Head of Inclusive Workplaces Julie Dennis said:

"Bosses should treat poor mental health at work in the same way as physical illnesses and regularly ask their staff how they are doing.

"Some people with poor mental health can also be considered disabled under the Equality Act, which means an employer must make reasonable adjustments at work.

"Mental health includes emotional, psychological and social wellbeing. It affects how someone thinks, feels and behaves. Having conversations with staff in a sympathetic way can be a good first step."

By law (Equality Act 2010) someone with poor mental health can be considered to be disabled if:

- it has a 'substantial adverse effect' on their life – for example, they regularly cannot focus on a task, or it takes them longer to complete tasks
- it lasts, or is expected to last, at least 12 months
- it affects their ability to do their normal day-to-day activities – for example, interacting with people, following instructions or keeping set working times

When making reasonable adjustments for mental health, employers should take into account that:

- every job is different, so what works in one situation might not work in another
- every employee is different, so what works for one employee might not work for another
- mental health changes over time, so what works for an employee now might not work in the future
- most reasonable adjustments are relatively easy and are of little to low cost but can make all the difference

It's a good idea to work with the employee to make the right adjustments for them, even if the issue is not a disability. Often, simple changes to the person's working arrangements or responsibilities could be enough.

They can cover any area of work, be inexpensive to implement and as simple as giving someone more frequent, shorter breaks or providing quiet rest areas.

According to the Office for National Statistics, 18.5 million days were lost in 2022 through sickness absence for mental health conditions.

[Find out more about mental health adjustments](#)

## Media enquiries

[Contact the Acas press office](#)

## Background notes

1. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size for employers was 1,025 employees. Fieldwork was undertaken between 29 August to 9 September 2024. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of British business size and region.

2. Participants were asked: How important is it for you for an employer to prioritise staff mental health at work?

The results were:

- Very important 47%
- Fairly important 42%
- Not very important 6%
- Not at all important 3%
- Don't know 2%

3. Acas is the leading authority on workplace relations and dispute resolution in Great Britain. We provide free, impartial advice to employers and employees on workplace rights, rules and best practice. We also provide training and tailored support for businesses that can help them succeed. Acas is a non-departmental public body that is governed by an independent Council made up of employers, employee representatives and independent members.