

FOR THE WORKPLACE

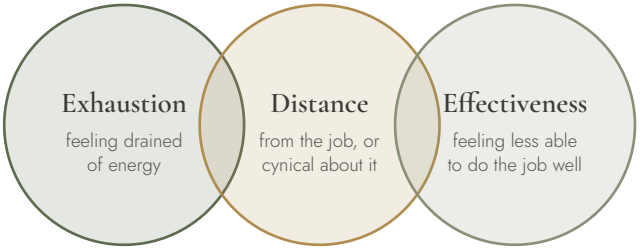
Burnout at work

What it is, what a person might be carrying, and what a team might notice.

WHAT IT IS

The World Health Organization describes burn-out as the result of chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed.[1]

It is named an occupational phenomenon, not a medical condition, and the WHO uses the word only for experiences at work.[1]



The three dimensions the WHO names.[1]

91%
of UK adults felt high or extreme pressure or stress in the past year.[2]

964,000
workers in Great Britain had stress, depression or anxiety caused or made worse by work in 2024/25.[3]

22.1m
working days lost to it that year, about 23 days for each person affected.[3]

TIME OFF



One worker in five took time off in the past year because of poor mental health caused by stress.[2]

HIGH OR EXTREME STRESS, PAST YEAR



Only 27% of workers said mental health is genuinely prioritised and supported at work.[2]

Shared as a place to begin a conversation. I am a guide and coach; for medical or legal advice, a GP, occupational health or a legal adviser is the right person. If you need someone now, NHS 24 is on 111 and Samaritans on 116 123, free, day or night.

Val McIntyre-Baird
feel grounded.
hello@valeriemcintyrebaird.com

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What burnout can look like, day to day

A person might be living with

- Feeling drained of energy, or exhausted.[1]
- Poor sleep, low energy and irritability.[2]
- Finding it hard to concentrate, or feeling overwhelmed.[2]
- Feeling distant from work they once cared about, or cynical about it.[1]
- Feeling less able to do the job well.[1]
- Not feeling able to tell their manager how stressed they are; women are more likely to feel this way.[2]

A team might notice

- More time off: stress, depression and anxiety caused 62% of working days lost to work-related ill health in 2024/25.[3]
- People at work but not able to work at their best. This is the largest single cost of poor mental health to UK employers, about £24 billion a year.[4]
- Good people leaving, and those who stay taking on more, which Mental Health UK calls a "productivity doom loop".[2]
- **Coming back without a plan:** of people who took time off for stress and then returned, only 17% had a formal return-to-work or recovery plan agreed with their employer.[2]

Worth knowing in Scotland

- Poor mental health costs UK employers an estimated £51 billion a year.[4]
- Healthy Working Lives is a free NHS Scotland service that helps employers improve workplace health, safety and wellbeing.[5]
- Working Health Services Scotland gives free, confidential health support to people who are self-employed or work for organisations with 250 or fewer employees.[5]

WHERE TO FIND OUT MORE

Mental Health UK
mentalhealth-uk.org

Health and Safety Executive
hse.gov.uk, Working Minds

Healthy Working Lives
healthyworkinglives.scot

NHS 24
111, any hour

SOURCES

1. World Health Organization (2019). Burn-out an "occupational phenomenon": International Classification of Diseases. who.int/standards/classifications/frequently-asked-questions/burn-out-an-occupational-phenomenon
2. Mental Health UK (2026). The Burnout Report 2026. YouGov poll of 4,502 UK adults, including 2,591 workers, November 2025. mentalhealth-uk.org
3. Health and Safety Executive (2025). Work-related ill health and workplace injuries, Great Britain, 2024/25. press.hse.gov.uk
4. Deloitte (2024). Poor mental health costs UK employers £51 billion a year. deloitte.com/uk. Presenteeism figure as reported by Employee Benefits, employeebenefits.co.uk
5. Public Health Scotland, Healthy Working Lives services. healthyworkinglives.scot/our-organisation/healthy-working-lives-services

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