



Two in three workers' mental health harmed by coronavirus crisis

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Poll of 13,500 GMB members – thought to be the biggest during the covid pandemic – finds workers terrified of taking coronavirus home

Two thirds of workers said their mental health has been harmed by the coronavirus crisis, a massive new survey by GMB has found.

In the poll of 13,500 public and private sector workers – thought to be the biggest of its kind during the pandemic – 66 per cent of respondents said that their work during the outbreak has had a serious negative impact on their mental health.

Other findings from the survey, released on World Mental Health Day today [October 10] include:

- 61 per cent of workers say their job is causing them stress or is otherwise impacting on their mental health.
- Fear of taking the coronavirus home was the frequently cited cause of stress at work (by 36 per cent of respondents), followed by workers' fear for their own safety (by 30 per cent).
- Front-line workers report being 70 per cent more anxious on average than official estimates for the whole population before the pandemic struck.
- Workers in retail, schools, outsourced services, and care report experiencing the highest levels of anxiety.

GMB is campaigning for a 'Mental Health at Work Act' specifying the approach and methods expected of all employers in managing mental health in the workplace.

If successful, the legislation would require absences due to poor mental health to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive on the same basis as physical injuries.

Nell Andrew, GMB National Equality and Inclusion Officer, said:

“Shockingly, almost one in five adults have experienced some form of depression during the pandemic - almost doubling from before the crisis.

“These stark results show it's not just workers' physical health that's being impacted by covid – but their mental health and well-being is too. And that's a massive problem for everyone.

“Much more needs to be done to prevent poor mental health in the workplace, during the pandemic and beyond.

“We urgently need full mental health risk assessments to become the norm, because protecting workers' mental health is just as vital as protecting physical health.

“As we face a second wave and widespread redundancies, we desperately need to protect at-risk industries and fully fund the public services that defend the mental health and wellbeing of the heroic workers who have kept the economy and society together.”

