

# The Whole Story: Work-related injuries, illness and deaths

updated March 2023

**HAZARDS  
CAMPAIGN**



On June 6<sup>th</sup> 2022, the ILO adopted safe and healthy work as one of its fundamental principles

Safe and healthy work is recognised internationally as a labour right that is fundamental to decent work

The UN-ILO estimates worldwide, work kills more than war every year!

2.78 million work related deaths, more than 380,000 fatal accidents and 2.4 million occupational disease deaths

As Jukka Takala of the ILO said  
“If terrorism took such a toll, just imagine what would be said and done?”

## The Whole Story!

<https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/safety-and-health-at-work/areasofwork/fundamental-principle/lang--en/index.htm>

## The Whole Story

- The HSE continues not to publish the total numbers of people killed through work related incidents and disease.
- ***Using evidence-based estimates of work-related harm, provided by various researchers, would ensure the appropriate policy development and allocation of resources.***
- Failing to expose the impact of employers' non-compliance and criminal negligence, means that the actual risk that workers and members of the public face are underestimated, and that cuts continue to be made to our health, safety and welfare regulation and enforcement.
- ***The reality is, that far more workers than officially reported suffer appalling working conditions, that put them at risk of injury, death or illness, at huge cost to themselves, their families and the economy.***
- This document represents the Hazards Campaign estimates, using a variety of sources to present a more realistic summary of the numbers of people killed, injured and made ill by work.  
(<http://www.hazards.org/disease/>  
<http://www.hazards.org/cancer/report.htm>) and The Whole Story (2008) by Hilda Palmer published in SHP ([www.shponline.co.uk/love-working/the-whole-story](http://www.shponline.co.uk/love-working/the-whole-story))
- ***The Hazards Campaign estimate that each year, at least 6 million workers are made ill, and more than 53,000 will die because of work and the real number of people injured by work is estimated to be many times more than the HSE estimate.***
- Covid-19 continues to infect, kill and leave thousands of workers with long term ill health and disability. We are unable to estimate the number of work-related deaths because they aren't recorded, reported or investigated. In Feb 2023 the Govt
- started to reduce the reporting of National Stats on Covid-19.
- <http://www.hazardscampaign.org.uk/?s=The+whole+story>

# The Covid Factor – How many are dying?

- Since 2020 the number of people who have died because of incidents at work has been affected by the deaths from Covid-19 (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/causesofdeath/bulletins/coronaviruscovid19relateddeathsbyoccupationenglandandwales/deathsregisteredbetween9marchand28december2020>)
- The article provides a link to a spreadsheet containing summary totals of deaths by occupation for the period 9 March to 28 December 2020 – <https://www.ons.gov.uk/file?uri=/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/causesofdeath/datasets/coronaviruscovid19relateddeathsbyoccupationenglandandwales>

*Under RIDDOR employers are not required to report:*

- *cases of disease or deaths of members of the public, patients, care home residents or service users from COVID-19*
- *cases where an employee has infected another employee with coronavirus through general transmission in the workplace*
- *cases where a member of the public has infected an employee with coronavirus through general transmission in the workplace, unless infection is likely to have occurred from working in an environment with a person known to have COVID-19, for example in health or social care*

**There are now no records of the number of workers who have died because of Covid, even where their job places them at high risk of contracting Covid. All we can do is estimate the number of people of working age that are still being infected by Covid-19. Between wk ending 3rd Feb and wk ending 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023 there were 240 deaths of people between the ages of 15 and 64 and we know some people work later than 64 and the 2 people who died in the age group 15-25 may not be working age. However, it is fair to say these were working age people although not necessarily in work.**

# Covid-19 Fatalities – Workers (ONS analysis and report)

## • 2020 – 2023

• **The first UK recorded deaths of Covid-19 were in March 2020. A year later more than 100,000 people had died in the UK . ONS have recorded those workers 20-64 years who have died. Many of them will be work related deaths but this is not recorded, reported or investigated in most cases. We should also recognise that many thousands of people have died because the transmission of the virus was not controlled in workplaces and people were infected in the community as a result.**

- 7,961 deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) in the working age population (those aged 20 to 64 years) of England and Wales were registered between 9 March and 28 December 2020.
- Nearly two-thirds of these deaths were among men (5,128 deaths), with the age-standardised mortality rate of death involving COVID-19 being statistically significantly higher in men, at 31.4 deaths per 100,000 men aged 20 to 64 years compared with 16.8 deaths per 100,000 women (2,833 deaths).
- When looking at broad groups of occupations, men who worked in elementary occupations (699 deaths) or caring, leisure and other service occupations (258 deaths) had the highest rates of death involving COVID-19, with 66.3 and 64.1 deaths per 100,000 males, respectively.
- In women, process, plant and machine operatives (57 deaths) and caring, leisure and other service occupations (460 deaths) had the highest rates of death involving COVID-19 when looking at broad occupational groups, with 33.7 and 27.3 deaths per 100,000 females, respectively.
- Men (79.0 deaths per 100,000 males; 150 deaths) and women (35.9 deaths per 100,000 females; 319 deaths) who worked in social care occupations had statistically significantly higher rates of death involving COVID-19 when compared with rates of death involving COVID-19 in the population among those of the same age and sex.'

- 'Almost three in four of the deaths involving COVID-19 in social care occupations (347 out of 469 deaths; 74.0%) were in care workers and home carers, with 109.9 deaths per 100,000 males (107 deaths) and 47.1 deaths per 100,000 females (240 deaths).
- Men who worked in healthcare occupations had a statistically higher rate of death involving COVID-19 (44.9 deaths per 100,000 males; 190 deaths) when compared with the rate of COVID-19 among men of the same age in the population; the rate among women who worked in healthcare occupations (17.3 deaths per 100,000 females; 224 deaths) was statistically similar to the rate in the population.
- Looking at specific healthcare occupations, nurses had statistically significantly higher rates of death involving COVID-19 when compared with the rate of COVID-19 among those of the same age and sex in the population, with 79.1 deaths per 100,000 males (47 deaths) and 24.5 deaths per 100,000 females (110 deaths); nursing auxiliaries and assistants also had elevated rates of death involving COVID-19.
- Rates of death involving COVID-19 in men and women who worked as teaching and educational professionals, such as secondary school teachers, were not statistically significantly raised when compared with the rates seen in the population among those of the same age and sex.
- This analysis does not prove conclusively that the observed rates of death involving COVID-19 are necessarily caused by differences in occupational exposure; we adjusted for age, but not other factors such as ethnic group and place of residence.'
- <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/causesofdeath/bulletins/coronaviruscovid19relateddeathsbyoccupationenglandandwales/deathsregisteredbetween9marchand28december2020>

## Total cases/deaths to March 2023

By March 2023 - there have been 20.5 million cases and 164,000 deaths. In the UK within 28 days of positive test, 186,094 with Covid on the death certificate and approx. 20,000 (12%) workers have died – though this is likely to be an underestimate

In November, 2022 the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council published recommendations on Covid as an industrial disease for some high risk workers:

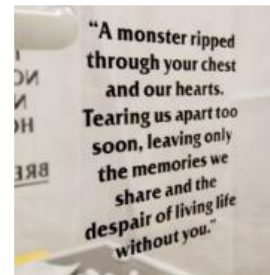
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1119955/covid-19-and-occupational-impacts.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1119955/covid-19-and-occupational-impacts.pdf)

# The Whole Story –much greater than the HSE estimate and record!



Ten times as many deaths caused by work incidents at least 1,375

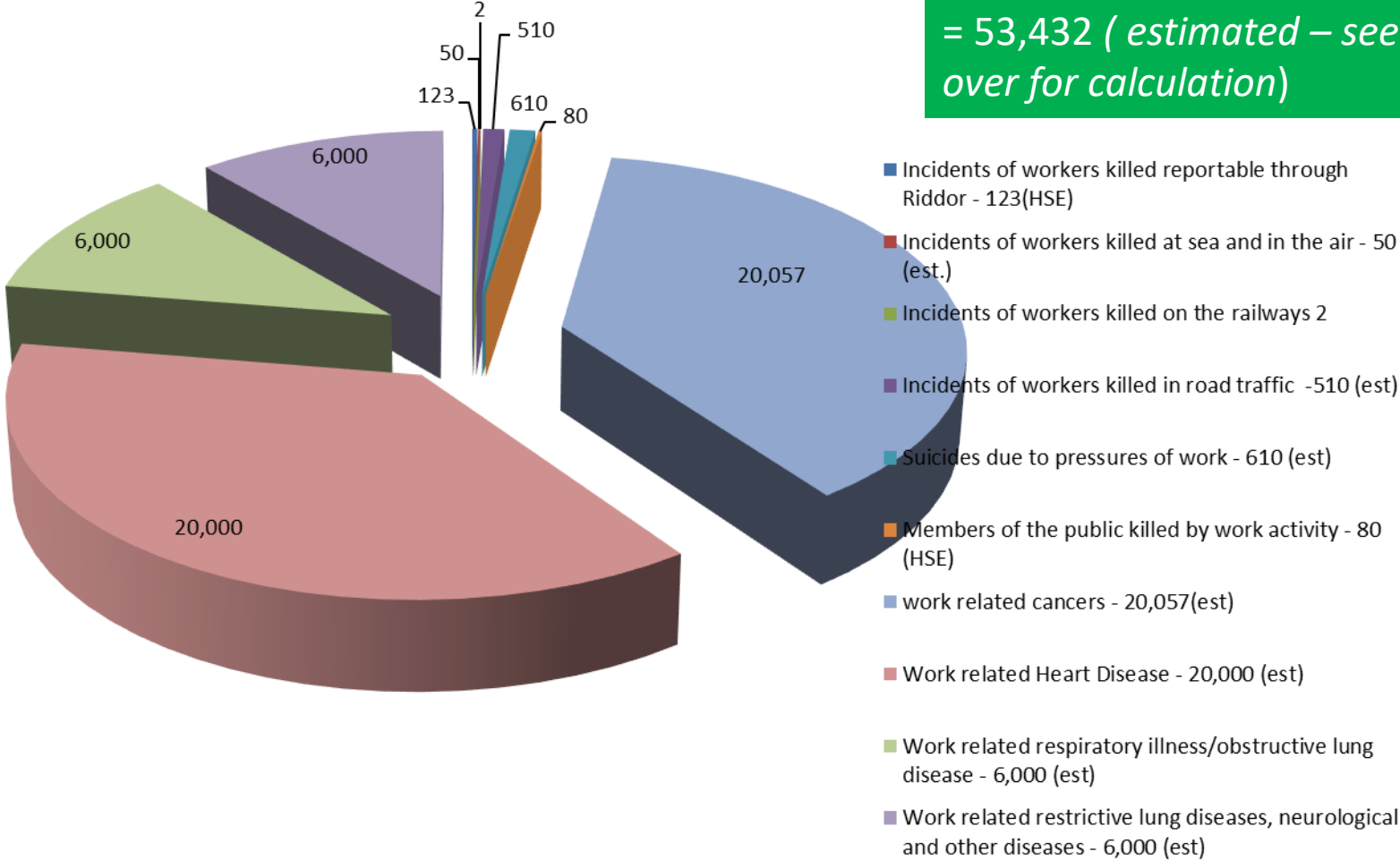
Four times as many work-illness deaths approx. 53,432



We estimate the number of people made ill by work is approx. five times greater than HSE estimate, at least 6 million

# Hazards Campaign Estimate of Work Related Deaths 2021-2022

Total Work related deaths = 53,432 ( *estimated* – see over for calculation)



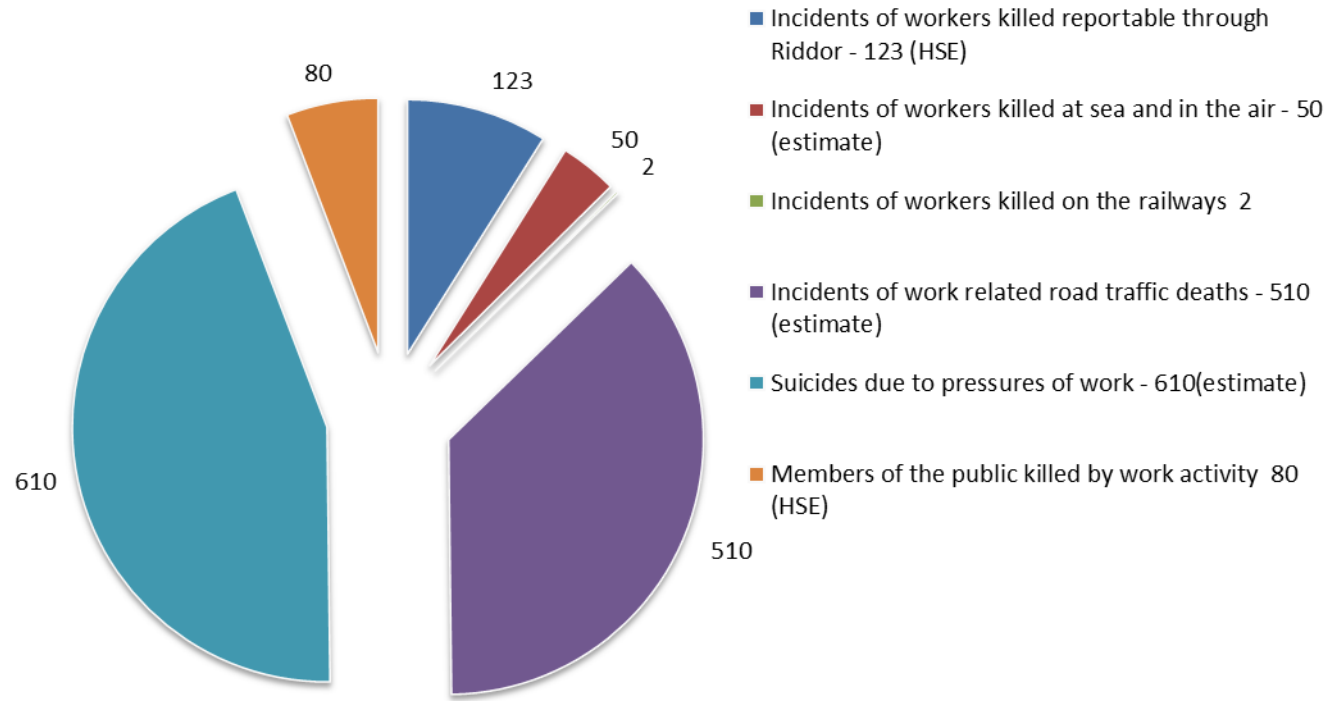
# Work Related Illness resulting in Death

- **52,057 = Work related illness resulting in death**
- Deaths from work-related cancers are estimated at approx. **12%** (between 8 and 16%) of all cancer deaths = **20,057** including at least **5,000** asbestos cancers which includes mesothelioma and lung cancers – see above
- Deaths from work related heart disease are estimated at **20%** of total heart disease deaths. These are due to stress, long hours, dust, fumes and shift work – **20,000**
- Deaths from respiratory illnesses which are work related, are estimated between **15-20%** of obstructive lung disease deaths – **6,000**
- In addition, there are at least the same number of deaths from other work related diseases such as restrictive lung diseases, neurological illness – **6,000**
- *Total deaths due to occupational illness are **not** reported by the HSE but estimated by the LFS (Labour Force Survey) at **13,000***
- *The HSE report **2,544** mesothelioma deaths in 2020. Experts record at least the same number of lung cancers for every mesothelioma death.*

# Work Related Incidents resulting in Fatality – 2021/2022

Total work related incidents resulting in fatality = **1,375**  
(for details of the figures used in estimate, see over)

## Hazards Campaign Estimate number of Work Related Deaths - 2021-2022



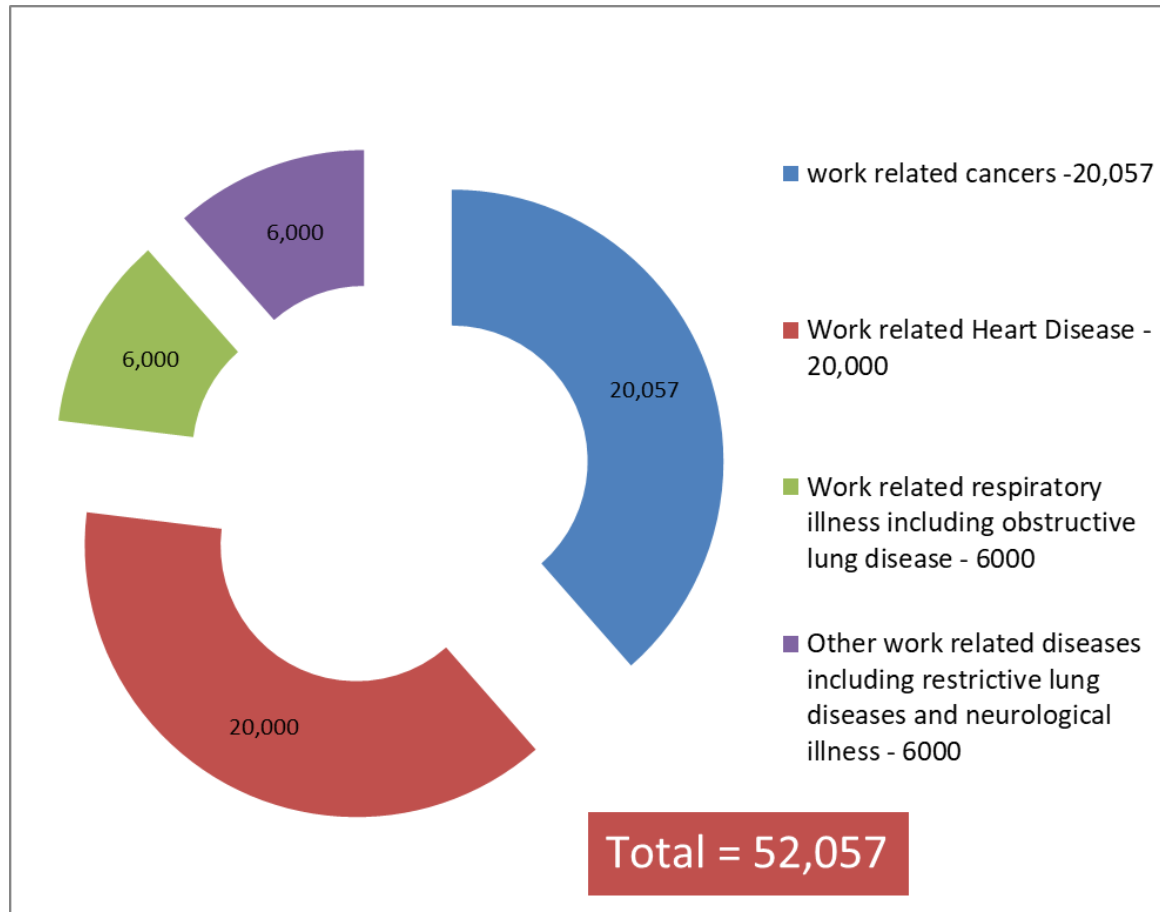
# Work Related Incident Deaths

## Sources of Information

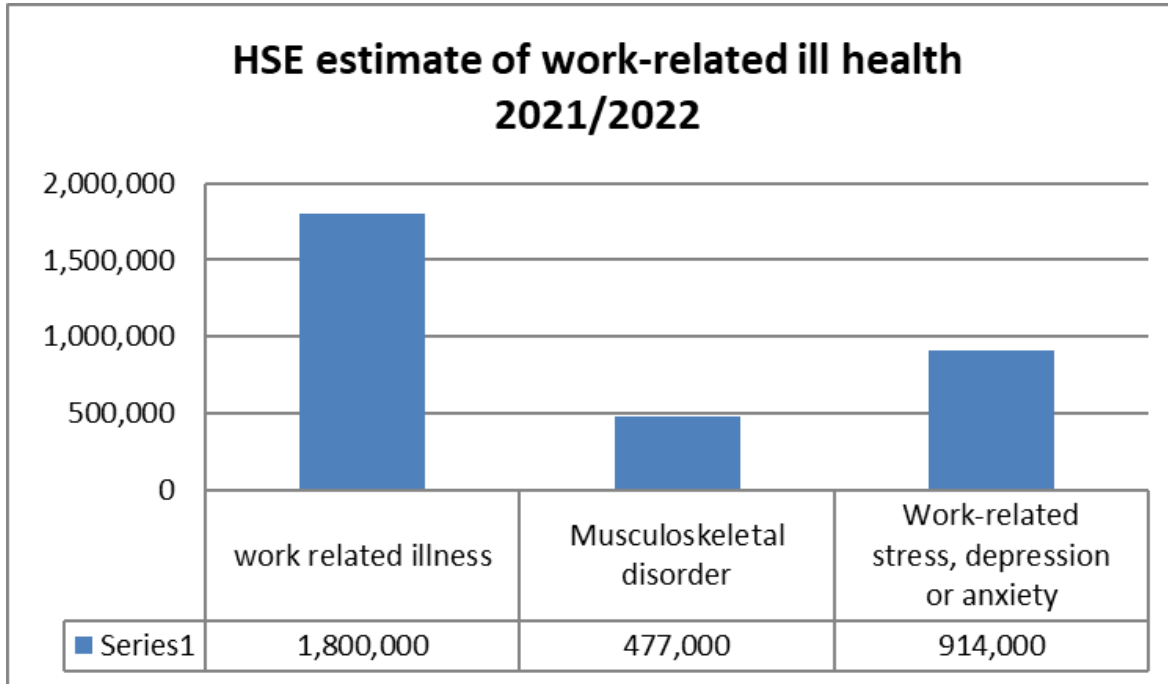
Hazards Campaign include data from:

- **HSE** (reportable incidents under RIDDOR) <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/pdf/fatalinjuries.pdf> and [www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/lfs/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/lfs/index.htm)
- Rail Safety - [Rail Safety April 2021 to March 2022 \(orr.gov.uk\)](http://www.rail-safety.gov.uk)
- Deaths in coastal waters are investigated by the **Marine Accident Investigation Branch** [www.gov.uk/maib-reports](http://www.gov.uk/maib-reports) and information estimated from **press reports**
- Deaths from air crashes are reported to the **Air Accident Investigation Board** and information estimated from **press reports** [www.gov.uk/aaib-reports](http://www.gov.uk/aaib-reports)
- Work related suicides are estimated to be possibly up to 10% of the total suicides (**Office for National Statistics**) plus evidence reported and officially recognised in Japan, Australia and France <http://www.hazards.org/suicide/suicidalwork.htm> <https://www.samaritans.org/about-samaritans/research-policy/suicide-facts-and-figures/latest-suicide-data/> - 10% of > 19 years (approx. 3.6% suicides )
- Members of the public who are killed through work related incidents are taken from the **HSE** figures <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/pdf/fatalinjuries.pdf>
- Work related Road traffic deaths include lorry drivers, some of the deaths of people killed whilst driving to work, and those killed on work related activity. The figure is estimated at 33.3% of the reported road traffic incident fatalities.
  - <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-in-great-britain-provisional-estimates-year-ending-june-2021/reported-road-casualties-in-great-britain-provisional-estimates-year-ending-june-2021>
  - <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2020/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2020>
- HSE RIDDOR notifications of Covid-19 fatalities = 318 – 2020/21 – no statistics available for 2021/2022 see: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/coronavirus/index.htm>

# Work-related illness resulting in death – 2021/2022 est. (excludes Covid deaths)



# According to the HSE (2022)



=  
**36.8 million  
working days  
lost to ill  
health**

However, this  
is not the full  
story.....

**On average there are only 1,914 disease notifications under RIDDOR per annum for the 638,000 new cases of work-related ill health that HSE estimate occurs every year (0.03%)**

– <http://www.hazards.org/workandhealth/doctorno.htm> - Dr Anne Raynal former Senior Med Insp. HSE  
2021/2022 1.8 million workers suffering from new and long term work-related ill health (HSE estimate/LFS)

# Work-related ill health

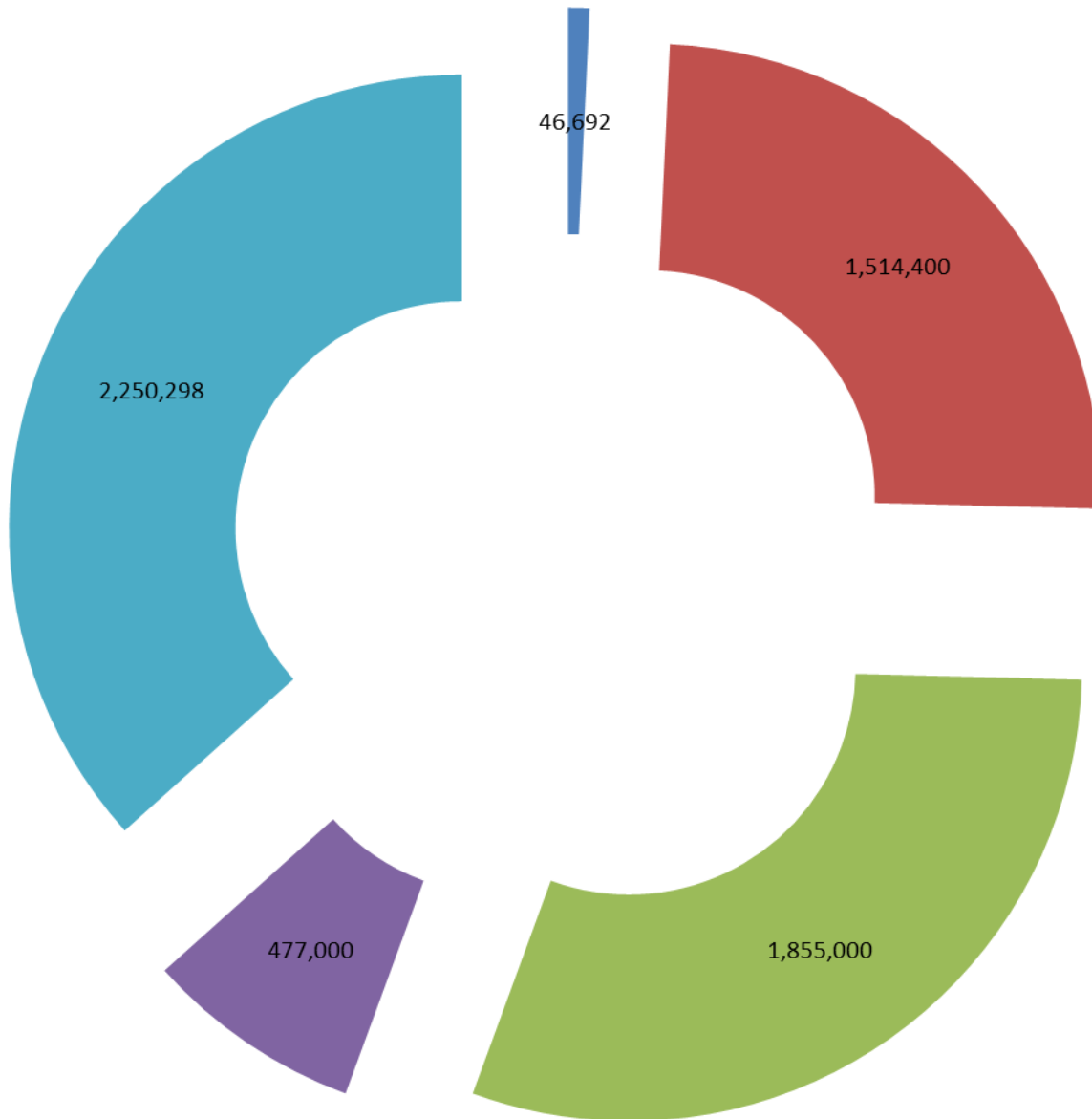
Hazards campaign estimate that:

- Of the 3 million people living with cancer in UK(2022) ([http://www.macmillan.org.uk/images/StatisticsFactsheet\\_tcm9-260514.pdf](http://www.macmillan.org.uk/images/StatisticsFactsheet_tcm9-260514.pdf)) less (approx. 0.5% children = 150,000 ) = 2,850,000 of which 12% are estimated to be work-related = 342,000 cases
- There were 391,000 (2020) new cases (<http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/health-professional/cancer-statistics>) less (1900 children) =389,100 of which 12% are estimated to be work-related = 46,692 cases
- 7.6 million people live with cardio vascular disease in UK (<https://www.bhf.org.uk/what-we-do/news-from-the-bhf/contact-the-press-office/facts-and-figures#:~:text=There%20are%20around%207.6%20million,the%20single%20biggest%20killer%20world%20wide.>) less (approx. 28,000 children) = 7,572,000 of which it is estimated that 20% are work-related = 1,514,400
- 12.7 million people live with lung disease in UK (<https://statistics.blf.org.uk/lung-disease-uk-big-picture>) less (1.1 million children with a diagnosis of asthma (<https://stateofchildhealth.rcpch.ac.uk/evidence/long-term-conditions/asthma/#:~:text=Background-Asthma%20is%20the%20most%20common%20long%20term%20condition%20among%20children,children%20currently%20receiving%20asthma%20treatment.&text=It%20continues%20to%20be%20among,young%20people%20in%20the%20UK.>)) = 11.6 million, less (lung cancers of 1.million) = 10.6 million of which 15% - 20% are estimated to be work-related = 1,855,000 (17.5%)
- Approx. 30% of UK population 20,252,680 have a common mental health condition – 1/6<sup>th</sup> children = 11,251,489 = 9,001,191 Approx ¼ are work related = 2,250,298 <https://www.statista.com/topics/8164/mental-health-in-the-uk/#topicOverview>  
<https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/culture/well-being/mental-health-factsheet#gref>

# Mental Ill Health

- <https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-03/Safety%20reps%20survey%202021.pdf> The TUC safety reps survey in 2021 says 'of all the hazards listed, stress is the most widespread concern, cited by 70 per cent of safety reps'
- [www.mindfulemployer.net](http://www.mindfulemployer.net) "**3/5 employees have talked to their manager about a current mental health condition**" in organisation who are Charter signatories
- [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org) "**50-60% of all lost working days are attributed to work-related stress** and the number of people suffering from stress-related conditions caused or made worse by work is likely to increase"
- [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk) "stress is more prevalent in public service industries, such as education; health and social care; and public administration and defence"
- [www.theguardian.com/society/2015/jun/10/stress-working-public-services-survey](http://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/jun/10/stress-working-public-services-survey) "93% of respondents say they are stressed at work either all, some, or a lot of the time" "**NHS staff....more than 60% say they feel stressed all or most of the time**"
- [www.willistowerswatson.com](http://www.willistowerswatson.com) – "a majority (85%) of Canadian employers say stress is the number-one workplace issue"
- <http://www.unitetheunion.org/uploaded/documents/Regional%20Stress%20Survey%20Results%20201611-28858.pdf> West Midlands Unite the union survey of public sector members. 74.84% are feeling stressed by their work and **52.76% of respondents say that the level of stress is unacceptable and causing them harm**
- [www.rcm.org.uk](http://www.rcm.org.uk) 'Stress affects almost 50% of England's midwives'
- [www.unison.org.uk](http://www.unison.org.uk) – Police staff survey "increased workloads that have resulted from the police **cuts, are the major contributory factor in the growth of workplace stress**"
- [www.stress.org/workplace-stress/](http://www.stress.org/workplace-stress/) - The American institute of stress survey "25% view their jobs as the number one stress in their lives" "80% of workers feel stress on the job" "**65% of workers said that workplace stress had caused difficulties**"
- **TEAR UP | HSE must admit there is a stress catastrophe under its nose and act - Hazards magazine**  
<https://www.hazards.org/stress/tearup.htm>
- **RESISTANCE! | Dave Smith's guide to organising. No.21. Resilience is not the answer - Hazards magazine**  
<https://www.hazards.org/mentalhealth/resistance.htm>
- **FAILED | HSE's refusal to act leaves workers in a desperate state - Hazards magazine**  
<https://www.hazards.org/suicide/failed.htm>
- **DEATH WISH | Pressure grows on HSE to act on work-related suicide risks - Hazards magazine**  
<https://www.hazards.org/suicide/pressuregrows.htm>

# Work-related ill Health



**Over 6 million people**  
Hazards Campaign estimate the total of just these work-related illnesses  
= 6,143,390  
The HSE estimates 1.8 million workers are suffering from a work-related illness and 850,000 are suffering from a new case of work-related ill health in 2021/2022  
Numbers are estimated from Hazards and HSE

- work related cancers - 46,692 new cases
- Work related Heart Disease - 1,514,400
- Work related respiratory illness - 1,855,000
- Work related musculoskeletal disorders(HSE) - 477,000
- Work-related stress, depression or anxiety - 2,250,298

# Work-related Non Fatal Injury

## What is the problem with RIDDOR injury reporting?

- **Massive under-reporting:** in 2007 HSE study and report said that only **30%** of reportable work injuries reported under RIDDOR compared to hospital records and only **13%** for self-employed  
[www.hse.gov.uk/research/rrhtm/rr528.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/research/rrhtm/rr528.htm)
- Changes made to what needs to be reported: has **reduced** the totals by **29%**  
[www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/riddor-notification](http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/riddor-notification)

*The Labour Force Survey estimate 693,000 million workers with non-fatal injuries 2019/20 and HSE recorded 65,427 non-fatal injuries to employees in 2019/20*

## So what is the real story?

It is **impossible** to get a true picture!

## What we know?

- Fewer than 1 in 15 major injuries at work result in HSE investigations (2009)  
[www.hazards.org/deadlybusiness/escapingscrutiny.htm](http://www.hazards.org/deadlybusiness/escapingscrutiny.htm)
- There are very *few prosecutions* for not reporting RIDDOR incidents
- The study by the HSE of under-reporting, referenced above, recognised that the likelihood of an incident being reported *increased* if there is a major injury combined with time lost from work.

# What is the Real Cost?



## What is the problem with RIDDOR injury reporting?

- Massive under-reporting (the labour force survey(LFS) estimate injuries at work are at least 2.6 times higher than reported)
- 29% less incidents reported because of changes made to RIDDOR in 2013
- 2021/22 HSE summary statistics record 565,000 (self reports from LFS 2021/22) only 61,713 RIDDOR reported non-fatal injuries reported
- Trade Union Health and safety representatives say that the real number is significantly higher and not all fatalities, injuries or ill health reportable – Covid not recorded, investigated and no one held to account!



## Occupational Health

- Only 0.03% of cases of diseases reported, that should be notified under RIDDOR – Dr Anne Raynal, former senior medical inspector with the HSE
- Employers failing to carry out occupational health surveillance
- Many workers with Long-Covid are not being provided with appropriate reasonable adjustments
- In Nov 2022. the IAC recommended that Long-Covid is prescribed as an Industrial Disease for some workers, the Govt have yet to respond



## The Real Cost

- The HSE estimate the cost of harm to society by poor workplace health and safety, as £18.8 billion. (2019/20 a 7% increase) **Hazards** estimate it to be between £30 and £60 billion – including illnesses
- Who pays? We do! Individuals [hse.gov.uk/statistics/cost.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/cost.htm) and families pay 59%; the state – us, tax payers, the public purse pays 21%, and employers who cause the harm pay only 20% (HSE) <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/cost.htm>

# For further information:

## **Contact:**

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Web: [www.gmhazards.org.uk](http://www.gmhazards.org.uk)

Facebook: Greater Manchester Hazards Centre- across the North West  
<https://www.facebook.com/GreaterManchesterHazardsCentre>

Twitter: @CentreGreater @Jnewsham

