

Health & Safety Representatives Survey 2024 - 2025

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Section 1: Introduction

The survey

This is the 15th biennial TUC survey of health and safety representatives. The report is used by the TUC to understand the changing experience of safety representatives at work and to help provide more targeted support. We also use the survey to inform public policy debates. The TUC also wants union safety representatives and safety committees to discuss and use the report to help with their ongoing work.

The responses provide information about the profile of safety representatives; the work they do to improve safety and the help (or otherwise) they get in this from employers and enforcement agencies.

There is some change in this year's survey compared with the last one. The 2022/23 survey was conducted still under the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic, and several sections deal with the management of Covid in particular. This year's survey questionnaire made a return to a pre-pandemic set of questions and also included some new questions regarding different hazards contained in risk assessments, and reps' opinions on the quality of these assessments.

This report is based on an open, online survey designed by the TUC in consultation with unions, which was distributed widely among reps, and analysis was undertaken by Dimitra Kotouza of the Labour Research Department's research team, on behalf of the TUC. The survey ran from 23 June 2025 to 25 October 2025 and attracted 2,711 responses. This number excludes duplicate responses and about 1,000 more respondents who loaded the survey but did not answer any of the questions.

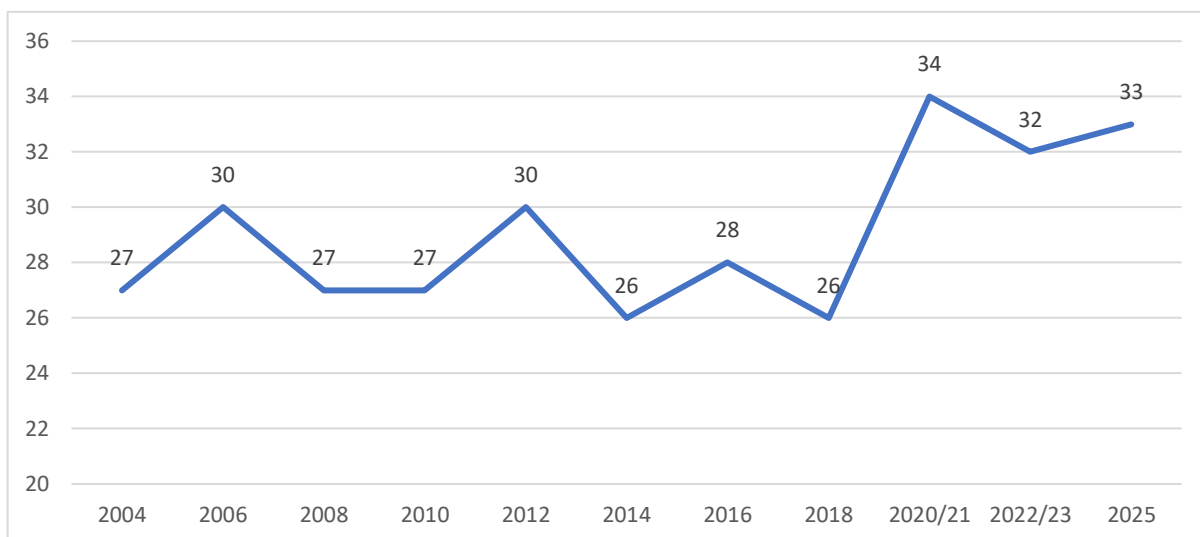
The TUC would like to thank all safety reps who took part in this survey and shared their experiences.

Profile of safety representatives and their workplaces

There are only slight differences in the profile of safety representatives in terms of their personal characteristics compared to 2022/23.

Just under a third (33 per cent) of the safety representatives responding to the gender self-identification question are women – a proportion that has stayed at a similar level since 2020/21 (see Chart 1)

Chart 1: Percentage of respondents who were women



There has been no significant shift in the ethnic profile of respondents. The proportion describing themselves as White ("White British", White European" or "Other white background") has remained at 89 per cent, as in 2022/23. That figure had fallen from the range of 93-95 per cent that has been found since 2010. (Before 2010 the categories were substantially changed so the data is not comparable.)

The grouping of those with some Asian heritage has remained at around 3 per cent. A total of 3.2 per cent (compared to 3.6 per cent in 2022/23) describe themselves as one of the following: "Asian British", "Indian", "Pakistani", "Bangladeshi", "Chinese" or "Other Asian background".

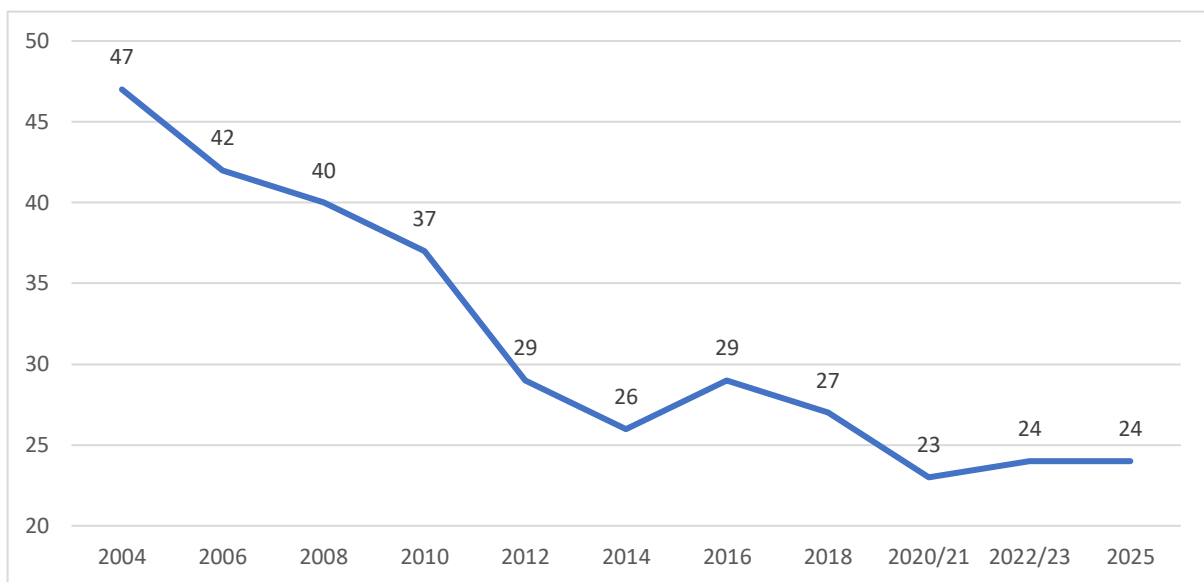
The proportion saying they are either "Black British", "Black African", "African Caribbean" or of "other Black background" has risen slightly to 3 per cent from 2.6 per cent in 2022/23.

The aging profile of Britain's safety reps continued over the past two years, with more than one in five (23 per cent) now aged 60 or over, compared with 16% two years ago. The proportion aged between 46 and 60 has fallen to 50% from comprising more than half of respondents in previous surveys. The proportion aged 45 or under has remained the same, at 24 per cent (see chart).

Table 1: Age profile of respondents

Age group	2020/21	2022/23	2025
16–35	8%	8%	8%
36–45	15%	16%	15.5%
46–60	61%	56%	50%
60+	16%	20%	23%

Chart 2: Percentage of respondents aged 45 or under



The sectoral pattern of participants responding to the survey shows a growing proportion working in the public sector (65 per cent) and a smaller proportion in the private sector (30 per cent) compared to 2023/23. These results are like those of the 2020/21 survey, which was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Table 2: Sectoral profile of respondents

	2018	2020/21	2022/23	2025
Public sector	53%	67%	56%	65%
Private sector	45%	29%	38%	30%
Not for profit/voluntary	3%	2%	3%	3%

This variation in the sectoral pattern may reflect the changes in the industrial spread of reps responding to the survey. Compared to 2022/23, there are more safety reps working in central and local government (20 per cent compared to 15 per cent in the previous survey), as well as more in health services (14 per cent compared to 12 per cent) and in education (13 per cent compared to 12 per cent). The largest group of respondents (19 per cent) work in "other services", followed by those in health services, education, and transport and communications (11 per cent).

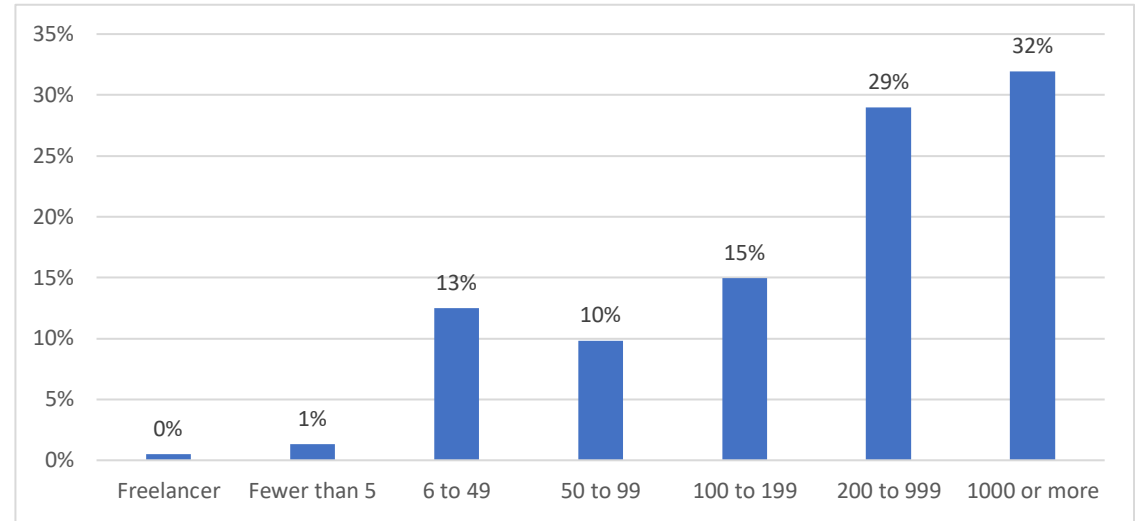
Table 3: Industry profile of respondents

Industry (number of respondents)	2018	2020/21	2022/23	2025
Other services (432)	17%	17%	19%	19%
Health services (317)	13%	11%	12%	14%
Education (285)	7%	17%	12%	13%
Transport and communications (253)	38%	16%	13%	11%
Local government (226)	6%	12%	9%	10%
Central government (219)	4%	8%	6%	10%
Distribution (201)	na*	6%	9%	9%
Manufacturing (180)	6%	7%	10%	8%
Energy and water (74)	4%	2%	3%	3%
Construction (23)	1%	1%	1%	1%
Leisure services (17)	1%	1%	0%	1%
Banking, insurance and finance (16)	0%	2%	2%	1%
Voluntary/not-for profit sector (14)	0%	0%	1%	1%
Agriculture and fishing (10)	0%	0%	0%	0%
Hotels and Restaurants (3)	na*	0%	1%	0%

*Distribution, hotels and restaurants were one category in 2018 and accounted for 3 per cent of respondents.

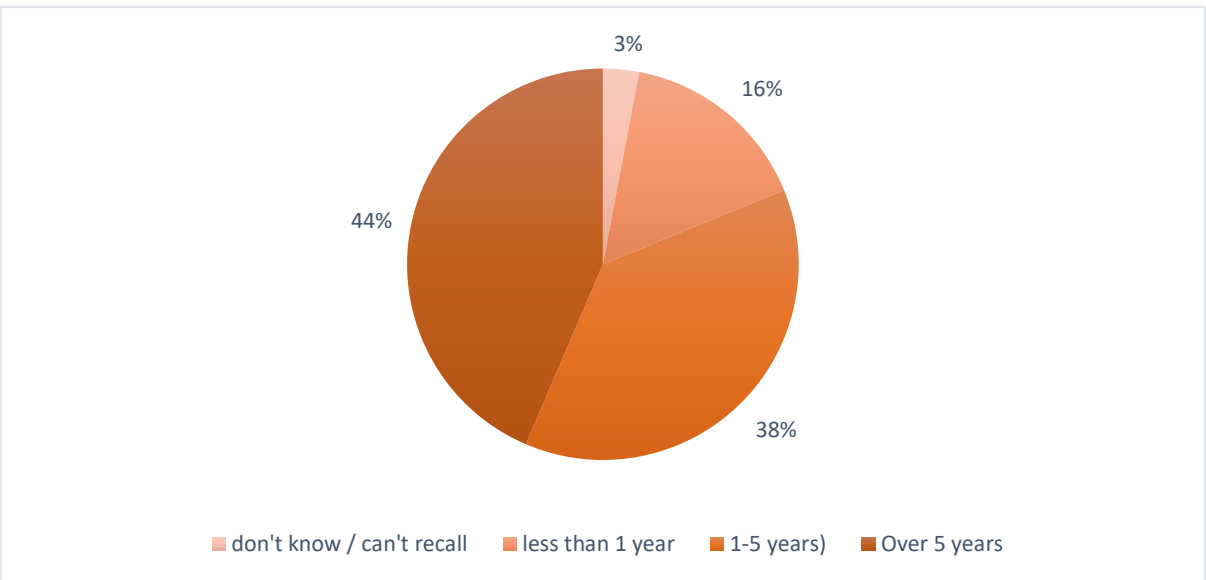
A higher proportion of survey respondents continues to come from larger workplaces. One in three respondents (32 per cent) are in workplaces with over a thousand staff. That proportion was 33 per cent in 2022/23 and 28 per cent in 2020/21. Those coming from workplaces with fewer than 100 workers comprise 24 per cent of the sample, compared with 28 per cent four years ago.

Chart 4: Respondents' size of workplaces



Forty-four per cent of safety reps have been in the role for more than five years, 38 per cent for one to five years, and 16 percent for less than a year. These numbers remain the same since 2022/23.

Chart 4: Time respondent has been a safety rep

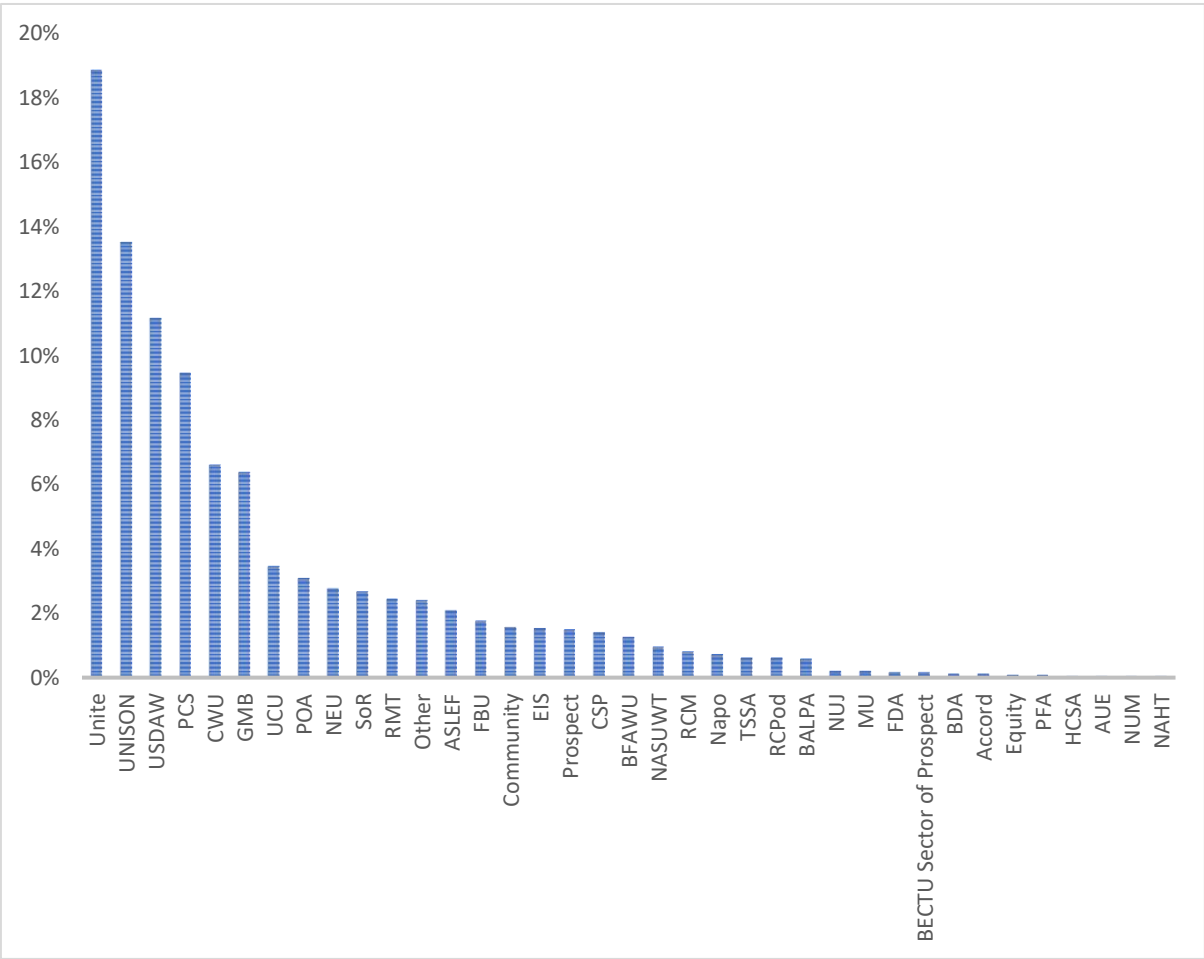


Seventy per cent of respondents are also union reps or stewards. That level has remained the same since the 2020/21 pandemic survey (69 per cent) which had shown a substantial increase on the 2018 figure of 42 per cent.

Safety representatives responded to the survey from all regions/countries of Britain. The largest groups came from North West England (16 per cent), Scotland (12 per cent) and South East England (11 per cent), proportions similar to those of 2022/23.

Respondents came from more than 36 unions, with the largest groups of respondents being members of Unite (19 per cent), UNISON (14 per cent), USDAW (11 per cent) and PCS (9 per cent).

Chart 5: Union membership of the health and safety representatives in the survey



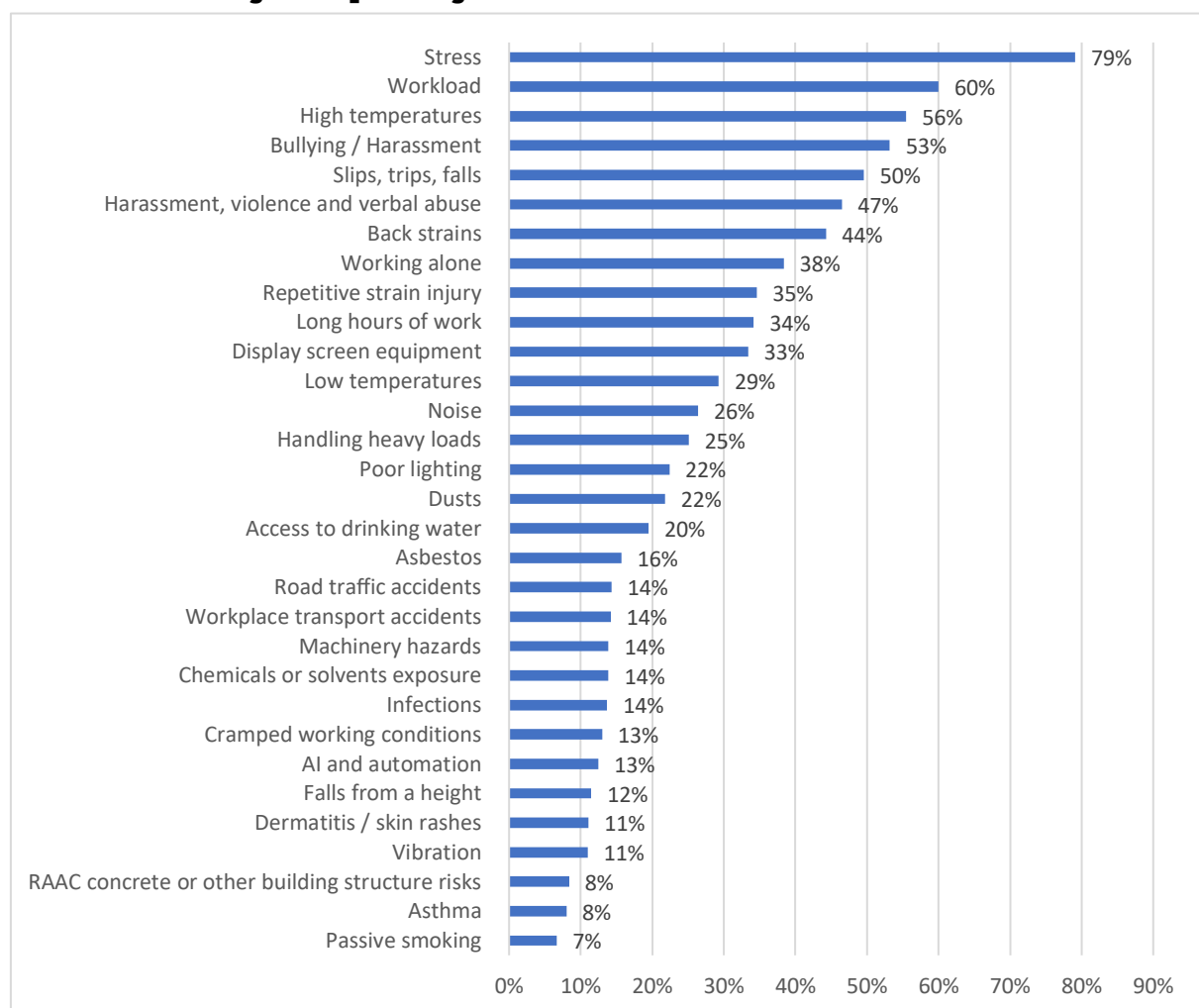
Section 2: Hazards at work

Main hazards

Safety representatives were asked to identify any hazards of concern at their workplace. The most cited hazards are shown in Chart 6 below. Stress is the top hazard identified, by 79 per cent of respondents, a higher proportion than both 2022/3 (73 per cent) and 2020/21 (76 per cent).

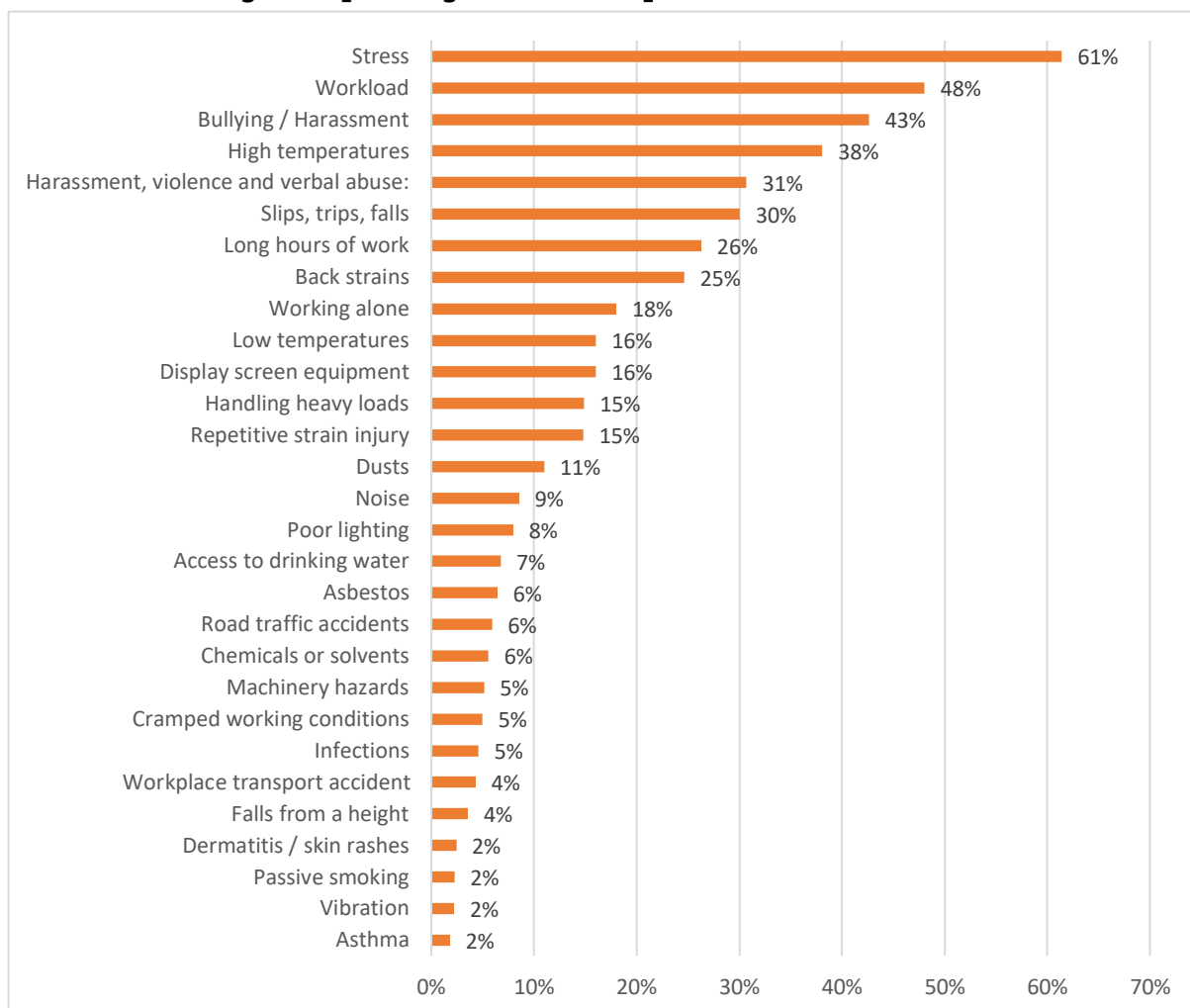
It was followed by workload (60 per cent) and high temperatures (56 per cent).

Chart 6: Percentage of reps citing hazards one of their concerns



Reps were then asked to identify the main hazards of concern to workers at their workplace and to identify the top five of their concerns in order of importance. All those mentioned as being in respondents' top five were aggregated to provide a table of "top five concerns" across all survey respondents (see Chart 7).

Chart 7: Percentage of reps citing hazards as top five concerns



This shows that, **of all the hazards listed, stress is the most widespread top five concern**, cited by 61 per cent of safety reps.

The other most frequently cited main hazards of concern were “workload”, “bullying / harassment”, “high temperatures” and “harassment, violence and verbal abuse”.

Stress remains the most-cited top five concern, but there are some notable changes to this ranking compared to 2022/23. “Workload” was listed as “overwork” in the previous survey, and had fifth place, while “bullying / harassment” had second place. The 2022/23 survey still contained “Covid-19 exposure”, which was the third most cited top five hazard. This has been now removed from the list of options. Table 4 compares the proportion of respondents citing each hazard as a top five concern over the last few years.

While stress is still the most commonly cited top five concern – as it has been in every survey since the category was defined as such in 2010 – it would appear to be less commonly selected since 2022/23. However, it should be noted that the proportions in some cases are not directly comparable with previous years – particularly because the

2022/23 survey included Covid-19-related hazards. If respondents had selected any of these in their top five list of concerns, certain other hazards would have dropped out of their list. This year, the renaming of "overwork" to "workload" may have shifted some of those who previously selected "stress" towards that option, which used to belong to the same category in 2010 ("stress and overwork"). It could alternatively mean that "workload" is, for an increasing number of respondents, a more accurate way to describe the health risks they observe in their workplace.

It is evident from another statistic that stress is still the most widespread hazard concerning reps, if not necessarily picked out as one of their worst five.

The largest difference compared to previous surveys is the proportion who selected "high temperatures" as a top five concern. It rose from being cited by around one in six reps to being a concern for more than one in three. A reverse trend can be observed for "low temperatures". This can be explained by the fact that the survey was conducted in the summer months this year, when on previous occasions it was conducted in winter. Nevertheless, it is clear that the climate of their work environment is something that concerns reps.

Table 4: .Proportion of safety reps citing hazard in their top five concerns

	2016	2018	2020/21	2022/23	2025
Stress	70%	69%	70%	59%	61%
Workload*	40%	36%	35%	28%	48%
Bullying / Harassment	48%	45%	48%	45%	43%
High temperatures	16%	14%	18%	15%	38%
Harassment, violence and verbal abuse**	24%	23%	31%	26%	31%
Slips, trips, falls	28%	31%	30%	29%	30%
Long hours of work	30%	29%	29%	21%	26%
Back strains	32%	32%	29%	29%	25%
Working alone	18%	25%	19%	15%	18%
Display screen equipment	21%	18%	21%	13%	16%
Low temperatures	12%	14%	20%	24%	16%
Handling heavy loads	13%	14%	14%	15%	15%
Repetitive strain injury	26%	23%	18%	15%	15%
Dusts	9%	10%	10%	8%	11%
Noise	11%	11%	9%	6%	9%
Poor lighting	7%	10%	4%	na	8%
Access to drinking water	na	na	na	na	7%
Asbestos	10%	9%	10%	8%	6%
Road traffic accidents	7%	10%	4%	5%	6%
Chemicals or solvents	6%	5%	5%	6%	6%
Machinery hazards	5%	5%	4%	5%	5%
Cramped working conditions	6%	7%	6%	4%	5%
Infections	5%	5%	10%	4%	5%
Workplace transport accident	5%	8%	5%	3%	4%
Falls from a height***	6%	7%	4%	4%	4%
Dermatitis / skin rashes	3%	4%	4%	3%	2%
Passive smoking	2%	3%	2%	1%	2%
Vibration	4%	3%	2%	2%	2%
Asthma	1%	2%	4%	3%	2%

* Redefined from "overwork" in all previous surveys.

** "Harassment, violence and verbal threats" in 2020/1; "violence and threats" prior to that.

*** "Slips, trips, falls from height" prior to 2020/21.

Hazards by sector

Certain hazards are much more prevalent in the public sector and others in the private sector. While this is not surprising in some cases, for example in relation to certain physical hazards found predominantly in private sector industries, it is less obvious for others.

Table 5 separates the results into public and private sectors, still concentrating on safety representatives' top five concerns.

Stress is the most common top five concern in both sectors, but it is more likely to be a top five concern in the voluntary and public sector than the private sector. **Workload is the next most cited top five concern for all sectors.**

Sectors differ in the ranking order of concerns. Slips, trips, falls and high temperatures, which are the third and fourth most prominent top five concerns in the private sector. Bullying and harassment is ranks third in the public sector instead. Long hours of work appear to be a more prominent top five concern for reps in the voluntary sector, ranking fourth.

Table 5: Hazards by public/private sectors

	Public	Private	Voluntary
Stress	67%	53%	70%
Workload	54%	41%	55%
Bullying / Harassment	49%	35%	47%
High temperatures	39%	40%	23%
Harassment, violence and verbal abuse:	37%	21%	22%
Slips, trips, falls	27%	41%	16%
Long hours of work	27%	29%	34%
Back strains	24%	29%	11%
Display screen equipment	21%	8%	23%
Working alone	18%	14%	26%
Low temperatures	16%	16%	14%
Repetitive strain injury	12%	20%	14%
Handling heavy loads	11%	24%	3%
Noise	8%	9%	8%
Dusts	8%	18%	11%
Access to drinking water	7%	7%	4%
Asbestos	7%	6%	9%
Poor lighting	7%	8%	16%
Infections	6%	1%	7%
Cramped working conditions	6%	3%	7%
Chemicals or solvents	4%	9%	1%
Road traffic accidents	3%	13%	4%
Machinery hazards	3%	9%	1%
Dermatitis / skin rashes	3%	3%	0%
Passive smoking	3%	1%	1%
Workplace transport accident	3%	8%	1%
Falls from a height	2%	7%	1%
Asthma	2%	2%	0%
Vibration	2%	4%	0%

Hazards by industrial sector

Table 6 shows the most widely cited top five hazards of concern in each industry.

Stress is the most widespread top five concern in eight of the 15 industrial sectors.

Workload is at least the second most widespread concern in seven of the sectors.

Table 6: The five main hazards of concern by industry

Industry (number of respondents)	1st concern	2nd concern	3rd concern	4th concern	5th concern
Agriculture and fishing (10)	Long hours of work 50%		High temperatures Low temperatures Both 40%	Bullying / Harassment Display screen equipment	Both 30%
Banking, finance and insurance (16)	Stress 69%	Workload 69%	Display screen equipment 69%	Bullying / Harassment 38%	Harassment, violence and verbal abuse 31%
Central government (219)	Stress 80%	Bullying / Harassment 67%	Workload 61%	Harassment, violence and verbal abuse: 42%	High temperatures 41%
Construction (23)	Asbestos 48%	Stress 43%	Bullying / Harassment 39%	Dusts 35%	Harassment, violence and verbal abuse: 30%
Distribution (201)	Slips, trips, falls 47%	Handling heavy loads 45%	Stress 44%	Workload 42%	Back strains 39%
Education (285)	Workload 75%	Stress 74%	Bullying / Harassment 46%	High temperatures 42%	Long hours of work 35%
Energy and water (74)	Stress 59%	Workload 50%	Slips, trips, falls 36%	Long hours of work 32%	Bullying / Harassment 28%
Health services (317)	Stress 68%	Workload 53%	Bullying / Harassment 50%	High temperatures 39%	Back strains 37%

Hotels and restaurants (3)		Workload			Slips, trips, falls
	Harassment, violence and verbal abuse				Stress
		Both 67%			Back strains
					All 33%
Leisure services (17)		Bullying / Harassment			Stress
	Harassment, violence and verbal abuse				Workload
		High temperatures			Both 41%
					All 47%
Local government (226)	Stress 66%	Bullying / Harassment 50%	Workload 47%	Harassment, violence and verbal abuse: 42%	High temperatures 40%
Manufacturing (180)	High temperatures 54%	Slips, trips, falls 52%	Stress 50%	Dusts 34%	Back strains 31%
Other services (432)	Stress 63%	Bullying / Harassment	Workload	Slips, trips, falls 38%	Harassment, violence and verbal abuse 37%
		Both 49%			
Transport and communications (253)	Stress 53%	High temperatures 46%	Slips, trips, falls 38%	Workload 36%	Long hours of work 35%
Voluntary sector (14)	Stress 71%	Long hours of work	Workload	Display screen equipment 43%	Bullying / Harassment 36%
		Both 50%			

There are some notable differences in some industries compared with the 2022/23 safety reps survey.

Agriculture and fishing

Because of the small number of respondents from this sector, it is hard to draw comparisons with previous years. However, it is interesting to note that, this time around, the top concerns are about long hours and temperatures, while in 2022/23 they pointed to the hazards of machinery and chemicals. Again, this change may be related to the fact the survey was conducted in the summer, and much of this sector's workforce works outdoors.

Banking insurance and finance

The top concerns in this sector have remained similar, although in 2022/23 Covid-19 exposure was at third place – now no longer an option in the survey – and low

temperatures at fourth. Workload and harassment, violence and verbal abuse have now come into the top five.

Central government

Harassment/violence/verbal abuse and high temperatures have come into the top five this year, taking the place of Covid-19 exposure and display screen equipment.

Construction

The most widespread concern in this sector this year is asbestos, which was not in the top five concerns in 2022/23. Another newly top five concern is dusts. Slips, trips and falls and back strains have fallen out of the top five.

Distribution

The number of reps responding from this industry has remained relatively high this year at 201. The top five concerns cited by reps in this sector are ranked roughly equally to one another, although workload has replaced bullying and harassment.

Education

The top five concerns in education have remained similar, although Covid19 exposure has been replaced by workload in the top five, becoming the most cited top five concerns in the sector.

Energy and water

The top five concerns have remained similar, although Covid19 exposure has been replaced by workload in the top five.

Health services

This is one of the largest groups by industry taking part in this survey. The top five hazards have remained similar this year, although Covid19 exposure has been replaced by high temperatures in the top five.

Hotels and Restaurants

This industrial category had been replaced by "hospitality" in the 2022/23 survey, but this year it was reinstated. It has attracted only three respondents for whom workload and harassment/violence/verbal abuse are the most prominent concerns.

Leisure services

The top concerns listed by reps in this sector in 2022/23 have remained, except Covid19 exposure and low temperatures, which was a top hazard in the previous survey. Climate concerns remain however, with high temperatures at the top of this year's top five hazards, alongside bullying/harassment and harassment/violence/verbal abuse.

Local government

The top five concerns have remained similar, although Covid19 exposure has been replaced by high temperatures in the top five.

Manufacturing

The main concerns of reps in this sector are similar, but, possibly because of the summer timing of the survey, high temperatures made it to number one concern, pushing bullying/harassment out of the top five.

Other services

This broadly defined sector has attracted the most respondents in this year's survey (19 per cent). The top five concerns have remained similar, although Covid19 exposure, which was no longer one of the options, has been replaced by workload in the top five.

Transport and communications

Many more reps responded from transport and communications than did two years ago, a 40 per cent increase, despite the overall fall in the total number of respondents. The top five concerns also changed somewhat. Stress and workload are still in the top five, but bullying/harassment, display screen equipment and Covid-19 exposure have been replaced by high temperatures, slips, trips and falls and long hours.

Voluntary sector

The survey received less than half of the responses from the reps in this sector compared to 2022/23. The previous concerns of Covid-19 exposure and display screen equipment.

Hazards by workplace size

Table 7 shows that stress is, as in previous surveys, the most widespread top five concern in all sizes of workplace, and it seems to take slightly more prominence the larger the workplace. In all sizes of workplace, the second spot is taken by workload, with bullying/harassment sometimes sharing second place.

This year's question on workplace size included an option for freelance workers, who could be working in a variety of workplace sizes or remotely from home. It attracted only 11 responses, for whom, surprisingly, stress was not the most common top five concern, but instead it was high temperatures followed by long hours and harassment/violence/sexual abuse. Stress did not even make it to the top five for these workers.

Table 7: Most common top five concerns in workplaces of different sizes

Workplace size (number of respondents)	1st concern	2nd concern	3rd concern	4th concern	5th concern
Over 1000 workers (725)	Stress 69%	Bullying / Harassment Workload Both 50%		High temperatures 37%	Harassment, violence and verbal abuse: 32%
200 to 999 workers (658)	Stress 61%	Bullying / Harassment Workload Both 45%		High temperatures 39%	Slips, trips, falls 37%
100 to 199 workers (340)	Stress 58%	Workload 53%	High temperatures Bullying / Harassment Both 39%		Harassment, violence and verbal abuse: 34%
50 to 99 workers (223)	Stress 57%	Workload 52%	High temperatures 48%	Bullying / Harassment 40%	Back strains 32%
6 to 49 workers (284)	Stress 63%	Workload 54%	High temperatures Bullying / Harassment Both 37%		Harassment, violence and verbal abuse: 32%
Fewer than 5 workers (30)	Stress 63%	Workload 53%	Bullying / Harassment 40%	Long hours of work 37%	Harassment, violence and verbal abuse: 33%
Freelancer (11)	High temperatures 45%	Long hours of work Harassment, violence and verbal abuse: Both 36%		Display screen equipment 27%	Workload 18%

Table 8 shows how the most common top five hazards overall vary by workplace size. Consistent patterns of difference in hazards that might be attributable to workplace size alone are not easy to detect, except for freelancers, who are not well represented in the survey sample. However, bullying/harassment appears to be more of a concern in the biggest workplaces (over 1000) and high temperatures were cited by more reps in workplaces with 50 to 99 employees.

Table 8: Most common concerns overall by workplace size (number of workers)

	Over 1000	200 to 999	100 to 199	50 to 99	6 to 49	Fewer than 5	Free-lancer
Stress	69%	61%	58%	57%	63%	63%	9%
Workload	50%	45%	53%	52%	54%	53%	18%
Bullying / Harassment	50%	45%	39%	40%	37%	40%	18%
High temperatures	37%	39%	39%	48%	37%	17%	45%
Harassment, violence and verbal abuse:	32%	30%	34%	29%	32%	33%	36%
Slips, trips, falls	31%	37%	29%	23%	25%	23%	9%
Long hours of work	28%	25%	28%	30%	27%	37%	36%
Back strains	23%	26%	24%	32%	25%	23%	18%
Display screen equipment	21%	13%	17%	14%	16%	17%	27%
Working alone	18%	14%	18%	16%	21%	27%	18%
Repetitive strain injury	12%	17%	14%	19%	14%	13%	18%
Handling heavy loads	11%	18%	15%	15%	17%	7%	0%
Low temperatures	11%	17%	23%	19%	18%	7%	9%
Dusts	9%	12%	14%	9%	12%	3%	18%
Noise	9%	9%	9%	5%	8%	3%	18%

Hazards by region/country

Table 9 shows the most common top five hazards of concern in the various regions and nations of Great Britain.

Table 9: Main hazards of concern by region/country

Region/nation (number of respondents)	1st concern	2nd concern	3rd concern	4th concern	5th concern
Wales (148)	Stress 63%	Workload 51%	High temperatures 37%	Bullying / Harassment 34%	Slips, trips, falls 30%
Scotland (273)	Stress 65%	Workload 54%	Bullying / Harassment	Harassment, violence and verbal abuse:	High temperatures

			47%	37%	30%
Northern Ireland (78)	Stress 73%	Workload 56%	Bullying / Harassment 54%	Harassment, violence and verbal abuse: 36%	Slips, trips, falls 32%
North East England (100)	Stress 63%	Workload 56%	Bullying / Harassment 55%		Slips, trips, falls High temperatures Both 35%
Yorkshire and Humberside (172)	Stress 57%	Workload 47%	High temperatures 46%	Bullying / Harassment 42%	Slips, trips, falls 34%
North West England (349)	Stress 63%	Workload 45%	Bullying / Harassment 40%	High temperatures 38%	Slips, trips, falls 36%
East Midlands England (143)	Stress 62%		Workload High temperatures Both 43%	Bullying / Harassment 36%	Slips, trips, falls 34%
West Midlands England (154)	Stress 64%	Workload 50%	Bullying / Harassment 44%	High temperatures 37%	Harassment, violence and verbal abuse: 35%
South West England (240)	Stress 65%	Workload 52%	Bullying / Harassment 44%	Slips, trips, falls 36%	High temperatures 35%
East of England (113)	Stress 66%	Workload 52%	High temperatures 50%	Bullying / Harassment 45%	Long hours of work 33%
South East England (230)	Stress 57%	Bullying / Harassment 48%	High temperatures 46%	Workload 44%	Long hours of work 30%
Greater London (175)	Stress 62%		Workload Bullying / Harassment Both 54%	High temperatures 44%	Harassment, violence and verbal abuse: 38%

Stress is the most widespread concern in all regions and nations and workload is second or joint top in all except South East England, where it comes fourth. The other top

five concerns across regions are bullying/harassment, high temperatures and slips/trips/falls. One difference between regions is that harassment/violence/verbal abuse makes it to the top five only in Scotland, Northern Ireland, West Midlands England and Greater London. **Long hours of work only makes it to the top five in South East and East of England.**

Compared to 2022/23, as well as the exclusion of Covid-19 exposure, which featured in the most widespread top five concerns in all regions and nations, it is notable that workload (renamed from "overwork") has surpassed bullying/harassment as the second most cited concern in most regions. Back strains, a widespread top five concern across many regions in England and Wales in 2022/23, has not made it to the top five this year.

Section 3: Managing health and safety

Safety representatives were asked about the way health and safety is managed in their workplace. In particular, the TUC asked about health and safety policies, risk assessments and occupational health services.

Health and safety policies

Overall, 94 per cent of safety reps said their employer has a written health and safety policy – a proportion that has remained stable over the years, fluctuating between 93 and 95 per cent since 2018. This proportion increases to 97 to 100 per cent across workplace sizes when excluding from the statistic respondents who do not know if a policy is in place (5 per cent). The small sample size (n=30) of those in the smallest workplaces of fewer than five workers makes it appear that such workplaces are more likely to not have a policy (two reps responded negatively). A larger sample would be needed to identify if there is a real difference at these workplaces.

Out of the safety reps who said they know whether a policy exists or not, 99 per cent say a policy does exist in the private and public sectors. In the voluntary/not-for-profit sector that proportion falls to 94 per cent, but, again, the much smaller sample size of the voluntary sector (n=71) is likely to be skewing this result

There is little difference in the prevalence of written policies between industrial sectors, although there appeared to be a slightly higher proportion of reps in education (three per cent) who knew their employer did not have a health and safety policy.

Formal risk assessments

The proportion of respondents who did not know whether their management had conducted any formal risk assessments in the last two years is at 19 per cent. Out of those who said they know, 85 per cent responded positively. This number appears to be slowly declining from 87 per cent in 2022/23 and 89 per cent in 2020/21.

Table 10 shows the variation by industry in the prevalence of formal risk assessments conducted in the last two years but also an indication of the degree to which safety representatives are aware of them having been done.

Table 10: Formal risk assessment conducted by industry

	Yes (proportion of those who know)	Don't know
Transport and communications	91%	19.84%
Central government	91%	11.87%
Energy and water	90%	18.92%
Voluntary sector	89%	25.00%
Banking, finance and insurance	88%	50.00%
Manufacturing	88%	13.89%
Local government	87%	11.56%
Agriculture and fishing	86%	30.00%
Distribution	86%	16.50%
Leisure services	86%	12.50%
Other services	82%	23.78%
Health services	79%	21.52%
Education	77%	23.67%
Construction	76%	8.70%
Hotels and restaurants	50%	33.33%

It appears that risk assessments are most likely to have been carried out in transport and communications and central government and least likely in construction. Hotels and restaurants is not a comparable sector because there are only three respondents in our sample.

Reps were asked whether the risk assessment cover all roles carried out by agency and self-employed workers as well as those who are directly employed. Thirty-six per cent said they did not know. Out of those who knew, 73 per cent said that the risk assessments had covered all roles. This is a fall from 85 per cent in 2022/23, which was an increase on 78 per cent in 2020/22 (again these proportions excluding those who did not know).

Safety reps' involvement in the risk assessment process

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 require that employers consult with recognised trade union safety representatives on health, safety and welfare matters.

However, **many safety representatives still say they are not consulted over risk assessments.** Survey participants were asked if they or other safety reps had been involved in their employer's risk assessment(s). The key findings are below (with the 2022/23 equivalent figures in brackets) and it seems there has been a worsening in this area in the last two years:

- Just 9 per cent said safety reps had been fully involved (17 per cent), with another 9 per cent involved "a lot" (15 per cent);
- 27 per cent said safety reps had been involved "a little" (33 per cent); and
- 43 per cent said safety reps had not been involved at all (29 per cent).

The rest did not know if safety reps had been involved. This lack of involvement and knowledge may be related to the high proportion of reps who feel they do not know enough about the contents of risk assessments or their adequacy, as shown in the sections below.

Risks to pregnant workers and new mothers

The survey asked respondents whether their workplace risk assessments included consideration of the risks to pregnant women and new mothers. Thirty-three per cent said they did not know. Out of those who knew, 79 per cent said such considerations had been included. However, reps in the public sector were more likely to respond positively (81 per cent) than in the private sector (75 per cent) and in larger workplaces of over 1000 staff (85 per cent) than in other workplaces (ranging from 65 to 81 per cent).

This result is not comparable to the 2022/23 related survey question, which asked about individual risk assessments for pregnant workers, and the answer depended on whether there had been such cases in the reps' workplace.

Risks of work-related stress

The reps were asked if their employer included work-related stress in the risk assessment(s). More than one third did not know (35 per cent). Of those who knew, 56 per cent said stress had been included in the risk assessments. Reps in the public sector were more likely to respond positively (60 per cent) than in the private sector (49 per cent) and in larger workplaces of over 1000 staff (66 per cent) than in other workplaces (ranging from 41 to 53 per cent).

Risks of sexual harassment

The reps were asked if their employer included sexual harassment in the risk assessment(s). The majority did not know (41 per cent). Of those who knew, 50 per cent said sexual harassment had been included. Reps in the public and private sectors were equally likely to respond positively, but more reported sexual harassment risk assessments in larger workplaces of over 1000 staff (59 per cent) than in other workplaces (ranging from 43 to 51 per cent).

Temperature-related safety practices

The survey asked reps if any safety practices were triggered in their workplace once a certain temperature is reached, for example during extremely hot weather. Twelve per cent said they did not know and another 9 per cent said their workplace temperature is regulated so the question did not apply. Out of the rest of the respondents, 32 per cent said safety practices were triggered for extremely high temperatures. Responses had similar rates across workplace sizes and across the private and public sectors.

Safety reps' opinions on the adequacy of risk assessments

The survey asked reps on their opinions on the adequacy of their management's risk assessments, and a high proportion, 27 per cent, answered they did not know, reflecting also widespread lack of knowledge about whether risk assessments had been carried out at all and employers' inadequate consultation with reps (see above).

Out of those who felt able to express their opinion, 59 per cent said their management's risk assessment was adequate. There was no difference in these results by sector or workplace size. This is a worsened situation than two years ago, when, out of the reps who expressed an opinion, 77 percent felt assessments were adequate, a slightly higher proportion than in 2020/22 (72 per cent). In 2025, health and safety reps appear to be less informed, less involved and less satisfied with health and safety assessments than they were two years ago.

Reps were asked to explain in a text response why they consider that the risk assessments were inadequate. There were 585 answers to this question. The main reasons reps cited are shown in Table 11 below.

The main reasons reps cited were:

- Risk assessments were undertaken as a generic tick-boxing exercise without consideration to the specifics of their workplace and often by untrained managers
- Workers and health and safety reps were not consulted or given access to the risk assessment documents
- Workers and reps raised concerns but they were not included in the risk assessment or employers dismissed them or failed to resolve them.
- Unaddressed concerns included stress, the welfare of workers with disabilities, high temperatures, pregnant workers, harassment and assault, risks with new equipment.

"They did not cover all hazards, they were self serving in that where a control would adversely affect production the hazard would not be identified"

"I work for a delivery company that delivers letters on foot, which has not identified slips, trips, dog attacks, violence, stress, heat exhaustion, dehydration, inadequate toilet facilities as something that could harm an expectant mother."

Table 11: Reasons risk assessments were considered inadequate

Main reason cited	Percentage
Incomplete exercise	43%
Hazards not resolved / inadequate measures	38%
Generic / superficial	25%
No input by or info shared with reps	17%
Infrequent / outdated / reactive	12%
Managers lack training / understanding	10%
Low priority for management	10%
Inaccurate exercise	7%

Thirty-eight per cent of respondents said risk assessments were inadequate because they were ineffective in resolving hazards. They said nothing was done about hazards identified in risk assessments or raised by reps, workers were not informed about risks, or measures to address them were inadequate. Sometimes risk assessments were said to have contained argumentation about why hazards could not be addressed. Other reps said that workers were held responsible for mitigating risks instead of the employer taking responsibility. The most common concern said to have been identified by risk assessments but not adequately addressed was high temperatures, referring to a heatwave that had been ongoing when this survey was conducted.

"Health and safety issues do not seem to get resolved especially if there is a cost involved to get the issue rectified"

"They explained why they were ignoring building regulations and size of room regulations. This doesn't mean that this is an adequate reason for ignoring them though."

"There are things such as workplace temperature which have remained on the risk assessment for years with very little improvement or change."

A quarter of respondents said that risk assessments at their workplace were generic tick-boxing exercises that were designed to avoid seriously considering the real health and safety risks of workers in their workplaces. They wrote about risk assessments being conducted in large organisations without visiting workplace sites or asking workers about their concerns. Some were described as being conducted only for one kind of worker (often office-based workers), excluding others who worked in other settings as for example drivers

or those in customer-facing roles. Outsourced workers were also often said to have been excluded.

"They are bog-standard generalised RA. Not fit for purpose for the line workers on the railway who are exposed to various unseen dangers which office-based staff are not exposed to."

Another common reason risk assessments were thought inadequate, mentioned by 17 per cent of respondents, was that health and safety reps could not have any input or influence on risk assessments, and often the concerns they raised were dismissed or ignored.

"The employer refuses to allow Union recognised H&S Reps to have an input in the risk assessments."

"They avoided the issue that was reported"

Twelve per cent of respondents said risk assessments were conducted infrequently by their employers and were out of date or that they were only conducted when there was an audit or an accident had already happened. Often those out-of-date assessments were also said to have been generic and incomplete. Many mentioned cases where changes in the workplace that introduced new risks did not trigger a risk assessment.

"They are now 12 years old and management refuse to update or review it because it would negatively effect some of their role."

"We are a big organisation & they are only completed/audited when there is an inspection."

"It's always done in-house after the event."

"New systems were bought in that drastically changed how we work with no consideration to wellbeing"

The rest of the reasons mentioned by reps, which frequently overlapped with one another and the reasons already mentioned, revolved around the sense that risk assessments were a low priority for their employers. They were said to not have been investing the necessary time and funds to conduct risk assessments, the managers that conducted them had not received training, and the risk assessments contained inaccuracies or deliberately

underestimated risks.

"Poor RA training to management and a toxic workplace hell bent on non-collaboration with the trade union safety team. This led to a risk assessment full of cognitive bias towards work as imagined rather than work as done."

"They are copy and pasted from another site. They actually mention working in an Amazon warehouse at points. I work in an airport terminal."

Table 12: Hazards identified as not addressed by inadequate risk assessments.

Hazard	Percentage
Stress / mental health	18%
Temperature	18%
Workload	7%
Bullying / abuse	6%
Fire	4%
Accidents / injuries	4%
Physical violence	2%
Sexual harassment	2%
Chemical exposure	2%
Infection	1%

Table 12 above shows the workplace hazards reps mentioned were not addressed by their employers' risk assessments. Stress, temperatures and workload were the most common, reflecting the overall results in the survey.

Employer provision of occupational health services

Occupational health (OH) schemes give access to a range of professional advice and services to employees, and 90 per cent of safety representatives said that their employers provide some sort of OH service – a bit fewer than the 94 saying so in 2022/23 and the 92 per cent in 2020/21.

The figures were 92 per cent in the public sector, 90 per cent in the private sector and 83 per cent in the voluntary/not-for-profit sector.

The balance between in-house provision and use of external services has only been changing very slightly, after a substantial fall in in-house provision between 2018 and 2020/21. The proportion of all respondents whose employer had in-house OH provision

was 33 per cent (32 per cent in 2020/21), while 57 per cent of all reps had OH provided via an external service.

There continues to be a difference in in-house provision between the public sector, where 35 per cent of respondents said there is in-house provision compared with 29 per cent in the private sector and 17 per cent in the voluntary sector.

Table 13: Occupational health provision by sector

	Public sector	Private sector	not for profit/ voluntary	Don't know
Yes - in house	35%	29%	17%	35%
Yes - external provider	57%	61%	66%	45%
No	3%	6%	11%	4%
Don't know	5%	4%	6%	16%

The prevalence of OH provision in each industry, and how it compares with previous years, can be seen in table 14. There appears to have been a slight worsening of provision in some sectors such as central government, health services, local government, agriculture and fishing and leisure services. There do not seem to be any stable trends in the other sectors, and the radical decline of provision in hotels and restaurants can be attributed to the tiny sample of three respondents in this category.

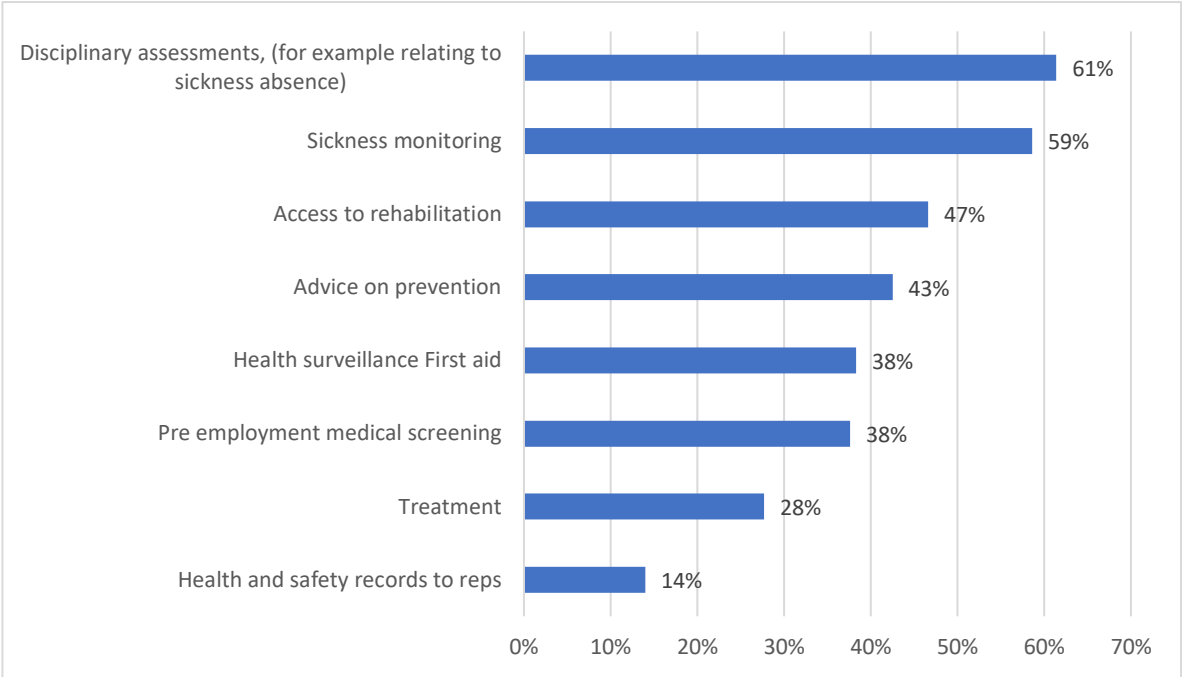
Table 14: Provision of Occupational Health services by industry

Industry	2020/21	2022/23	2025
Central government	99%	96%	96%
Health services	98%	97%	96%
Banking, finance and insurance	88%	88%	94%
Energy and water	100%	100%	93%
Local government	98%	99%	92%
Manufacturing	93%	97%	92%
Transport and communications	93%	94%	92%
Distribution	85%	91%	88%
Other services	91%	93%	88%
Education	85%	94%	87%
Voluntary sector	88%	91%	83%
Agriculture and fishing	100%	75%	80%
Construction	76%	84%	78%
Leisure services	91%	83%	75%
Hotels and restaurants	100%	85%*	33%

*"Hotels and restaurants" was named "hospitality" in 2022/23 only.

This year, the survey asked reps to select what kinds of occupational health services were offered by employers. Disciplinary assessments relating to sickness absence were most selected, along with sickness monitoring, revealing that many reps have a clear view of occupational health services as simultaneously disciplinary tools used by employers. The provision of health and safety records to reps was the least commonly selected option, reflecting the trend identified earlier towards excluding health and safety reps from health and safety related matters.

Chart 8: Kinds of occupational health services provided by reps' employers



Section 4: Rights of health and safety representatives

Safety representatives have wide-ranging rights and powers under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 and other health and safety legislation. The TUC survey asked safety representatives about the extent to which they have been able to exercise these rights and powers.

Training

The survey asked survey participants about the range of training they have received as a health and safety rep. The responses are shown in Table 15, together with comparisons with the past two surveys. It should be noted that the question refers to health and safety training received by the respondent at any point, not just in the period covered by the survey.

Table 15: Training received by survey respondents 2020 – 2025

	2020/21	2022/23	2025
TUC Education Health and Safety 1	44%	40%	40%
TUC Education Health and Safety 2	28%	28%	27%
TUC Diploma/Certificate in OSH	15%	15%	14%
Course provided by your union	57%	63%	59%
Course provided by employer	13%	16%	12%
Joint union-employer course	6%	7%	5%
Another health and safety course	18%	18%	15%
No health and safety training	8%	6%	8%

The training provided by their own union remains the one reps most commonly received, followed by the Stage 1 and Stage 2 TUC Education courses. However, the proportions receiving training have fallen slightly since two years ago. This may reflect the increased efforts by many unions during the Covid-19 pandemic to provide more health and safety courses for their reps, an effort that may have now become slightly less intense. It may also be due to the TUC's efforts to identify future health and safety reps who have not yet been formally trained.

Table 16: Training received according to the time served as a safety rep

	Over 5 years	1 to 5 years	Less than 1 year	Don't know / can't recall
TUC Education Health and Safety 1	46%	40%	34%	10%
TUC Education Health and Safety 2	39%	23%	8%	7%
TUC certificate in OSH	23%	10%	3%	2%
Course provided by your union	67%	59%	48%	17%
Course provided by employer	18%	8%	6%	3%
Joint union / employer course	8%	3%	2%	5%
Another health and safety course	21%	12%	9%	5%
No health and safety training	1%	6%	20%	49%
Don't know / cannot recall	1%	1%	2%	15%

The majority of safety representatives of all levels of experience have had some health and safety training, most commonly from their union or from TUC Education. However, the proportion of the newest of safety reps (in post for under one year) who have not had any training has increased since the last survey, when 18 per cent said they had not received any, seeming to return to the 2020/21 levels of 23 per cent.

Table 17: Proportion of reps who used TUC materials

TUC Materials	Reps using
Policy or guidance documents	49%
TUC Education online guides	43%
Webinars	42%
The 'Brown Book' guide to Safety Reps and Safety Committees Regulations	35%
Hazards at Work manual	24%
No, I have not used any of the above	23%
Blogs	7%

This year reps were asked what TUC health and safety materials they had used. Almost half of all reps had used policy or guidance documents, followed by TUC education online guides and webinars.

Time off for training

The regulations and subsequent court cases have established the right of safety representatives to time off for training. However, a 47 per cent of all respondents said there have been times when they have been unable to take up training courses. This is a worrying increase compared to 28 per cent in 2022/23 and 30 per cent in 2020/21.

Reps were asked for the reasons they could not take up courses. The most common reason cited was that reps were too busy at work, followed by employers refusing time off for training.

Table 18: Have you ever been unable to undertake training courses?

Answer	Percentage
No	64%
Yes (Total)	47%
Yes, because I was too busy at work	12%
Yes, because my employer refused time off	11%
Yes, because I could not make the time or location of the course	9%
Yes, for another reason	7%
Yes, because of my family responsibilities	5%
Yes, because of barriers due to my health or disability status	2%
Yes, because I lacked appropriate technology or IT skills to access the training	1%
Don't know	6%

Consultation in “good time”

Safety representatives have the right to be consulted on health, safety and welfare matters by their employer. The survey asked respondents to select which of three descriptions about how their employer consults with them most closely fitted their experience, with the following results:

- 39 per cent said *“my employer consults me/my union on a regular scheduled basis AND when urgent issues arise”*;
- 21 per cent said *“my employer consults me/my union whenever urgent issues arise BUT NOT on a regular scheduled basis”*; and
- 31 per cent said *“my employer consults me/my union infrequently/only when I/my union raise(s) issues with them”*.

These responses are effectively unchanged on those for 2022/23 and 2020/21.

There are substantial variations between different industries in the level of regular scheduled consultation between employer and union. The worst in this regard are leisure services, health services, and agriculture and fishing. As mentioned earlier, hotels and restaurants had too small a sample size for a valid comparison.

Table 19: Level of employer consultation with safety representatives by industry

	Scheduled AND when urgent issues arise	infrequently / only when union raises issues	Urgent NOT scheduled	Don't know	No regular, single employer
Banking, finance and insurance	56%	6%	25%	13%	0%
Energy and water	55%	19%	15%	11%	0%
Central government	47%	23%	25%	5%	0%
Distribution	46%	24%	22%	8%	0%
Transport and communications	43%	26%	25%	6%	1%
Manufacturing	42%	34%	21%	3%	1%
Local government	41%	34%	18%	5%	1%
Other services	37%	31%	21%	10%	2%
Voluntary sector	36%	29%	7%	7%	21%
Construction	35%	35%	9%	17%	4%
Education	32%	44%	16%	6%	1%
Agriculture and fishing	30%	30%	10%	30%	0%
Health services	29%	34%	22%	15%	0%
Leisure services	29%	41%	18%	6%	6%
Hotels and restaurants	0%	67%	0%	0%	33%

Compared with two years ago, for most industries the picture has worsened, particularly for agriculture and fishing in which 50 per cent of respondents had previously there was scheduled and regular consultation. There are few exceptions of slight improvement as in "other services", distribution and central government.

Employers are more likely to conduct regular scheduled consultation where they have more than 200 workers. However, even in establishments with more than 1,000 staff, only 49 53 per cent say their employer consults with the union on a regular scheduled basis, down from 53 per cent in 2022/23.

Inspections

One of the most important rights that safety representatives have is the right to inspect the workplace, allowing them to identify hazards and highlight action to be undertaken by

management. The Approved Code of Practice states that they can inspect every three months, or more frequently by agreement, so long as they notify the employer in writing.

The survey found that one in four safety representatives (25 per cent) had not conducted any inspections in the past 12 months – the same proportion as in the previous two surveys. A higher proportion than two years ago has conducted one to two inspections, although a lower proportion has conducted three or more.

- 18 per cent had conducted one inspection (16 per cent in 2022/23);
- 14 per cent had conducted two inspections (13 per cent in 2022/23);
- 18 per cent had conducted three to four inspections (20 per cent in 2022/23);
- 19 per cent had conducted five or more inspections (21 per cent in 2022/23); and
- 25 per cent conducted no inspections.

The more experienced the rep, the more likely they are to carry out more frequent inspections. Just almost half (46 per cent) of those with over five years' experience have carried out three or more inspections in the last 12 months (but fewer than the 51 per cent who said this in 2022/23). That compares with 36 per cent of representatives with one to five years' experience (the same proportion as in 2022/23). Among those in post for less than a year, just 19 per cent had conducted three or more inspections. This is a fall compared with 26 per cent in 2022/23 but higher than 15 per cent in 2020/21.

Time spent on safety representatives' duties

Survey respondents were asked how much time they spend specifically on health and safety matters in an average week. The majority spend less than five hours, but a small proportion spend more than 20 hours. Compared to two years ago, the biggest increases are among those who spend less than one hour and those who spend over 20 hours.

- 44 per cent spend an hour or less (37 per cent in 2022/23);
- 34 per cent spend between one and five hours (36 per cent in 2022/23);
- 8 per cent spend between five and 10 hours (9 per cent in 2022/23);
- 3 per cent spend between 10 and 20 hours (3 per cent in 2022/23) and
- 5 per cent spend over 20 hours (2 per cent in 2022/23).

Paid time off for safety duties

Three quarters of respondents (75 per cent) said they get paid time away from their job responsibilities to carry out their role as a rep. This proportion is higher among those who have been health and safety reps for more than five years (81 per cent) and among those who also workplace representatives/shop stewards (79 per cent).

Of those who do get paid time off:

- 16 per cent get an hour or less per week;
- 31 per cent get one to five hours per week;
- 13 per cent get five to 10 hours per week;
- 7 per cent get 10–20 hours per week;
- 4 per cent get over 20 hours per week; and
- 18 per cent are on full-time release.

Joint union-management committees

The work of joint union-management health and safety committees is a key factor in making safety representatives' work effective. However, almost one in five respondents (19 per cent) said that there is not a joint committee where they work – albeit this is a slightly lower percentage than in 2022/23 (21 per cent) and 2020/21 (23 per cent).

Seventy-three per cent of survey respondents said there is a safety committee. Of these, 79 per cent meet regularly - a slightly rising proportion than the 76 in 2023/23 and the 73 per cent in 2020/21.

Overall, 58 per cent of workplaces covered by the survey have a union-management safety committee that meets regularly. The proportion that does so varies considerably according to the size of the workplace, with those with over 200 employees much more likely to have a committee.

Table 20: Proportion of reps whose safety committees meet regularly by workplace size

Workplace size (number of workers)	Committee that meets regularly
1000 or more	77%
200 to 999	61%
100 to 199	41%
50 to 99	37%
6 to 49	43%
Fewer than 5	37%
I work freelance	18%

Safety representatives in the public sector are slightly more likely to have joint committees meeting regularly (60 per cent) compared to those in the private sector (57 per cent), and the voluntary/not-for-profit sector (46 per cent).

The industries most likely to have joint union-management safety committees meeting regularly are energy and water, health services and manufacturing. Those least likely to are

other services, agriculture and fishing and leisure services (data in the hotels and restaurants category are not comparable because of the tiny sample).

Table 21: Proportion of reps whose safety committees meet regularly by industry

Industry	Committee that meets regularly
Energy and water	72%
Health services	67%
Manufacturing	67%
Central government	66%
Transport and communications	65%
Banking, finance and insurance	63%
Local government	61%
Distribution	61%
Construction	57%
Voluntary sector	50%
Education	46%
Other services	43%
Agriculture and fishing	40%
Hotels and restaurants	33%
Leisure services	29%

Sources of information and support

Safety representatives were asked what sources of information they regularly use to update their knowledge and understanding. The most commonly used sources were their union's own website or newsletters, with nearly all respondents (95 per cent) saying they used these either "often" (57 per cent) or "occasionally" (38 per cent). In addition, most (87 per cent) said they used information from the TUC website / guides and 75 per cent used their sector's press and websites.

Table 22: Information sources used most frequently

	Often	Occasionally
Your union website/ newsletters	57%	38%
TUC website / guides	39%	49%
Sector press / websites	24%	51%
Hazards Magazine	19%	40%
Labour Research Department website / newsletters	19%	40%
IOSH or other health and safety organisations	16%	45%
Hazards Campaign	16%	41%
Institute for Employment Rights	12%	35%
SHP Online website (Safety and Health Practitioner)	7%	23%

Section 5: Enforcement

The survey asked about visits by health and safety inspectors, be they HSE inspectors, Environmental Health Officers or other relevant safety inspectors (such as from the Railways Inspectorate).

The responses indicate that 63 per cent of safety reps did not know of any visit ever having been made by the relevant safety inspectorate. This was split between 18 per cent saying there had never been one and 44 per cent who did not know if there had. These numbers are similar to those of two years ago.

A similar proportion as in the last survey said there had been an inspection “within the last 12 months”.

- 21 per cent of safety representatives said that their workplace had been inspected within the last 12 months (compared with 22 per cent in 2022/23 and 24 per cent in 2020/21);
- 9 per cent said the last inspection was between one and three years ago (compared with 11 per cent in 2022/23 and 10 per cent in 2020/21);
- 7 per cent said it was over three years ago (compared with 7 per cent in 2022/23 and 6 per cent in 2020/21);
- 18 per cent said there had never, as far as they know, been an inspection, with another 43 per cent saying they did not know if there had been. (In 2022/23, 27 per cent said there had never been an inspection and 43 per cent did not know).

Inspections were more likely to have taken place in the last year in the private sector (27 per cent) than in the public sector (19 per cent) and the voluntary / not for profit sector (13 per cent).

Representatives from the largest workplaces (over 200 employees) and the smallest (under five) were more likely than others to have seen an inspection in the last year (23 per cent and 28 per cent respectively, although note that the latter is based on a small sample of 25 respondents). Among workplaces between those sizes, 18-19 per cent had seen an inspection in the last 12 months.

Table 23: Last inspection by HSE or relevant inspectorate, by industry

Row Labels	Within the last 12 months	One to three years ago	Over three years ago	Never, as far as you know	Don't know
Agriculture and fishing	50%	0%	0%	10%	30%
Manufacturing	39%	14%	11%	3%	32%
Energy and water	32%	5%	0%	11%	51%
Distribution	27%	11%	8%	18%	36%
Construction	26%	0%	13%	22%	39%
Other services	22%	9%	7%	16%	45%
Health services	21%	13%	6%	12%	48%
Local government	21%	11%	5%	16%	46%
Education	19%	9%	6%	18%	48%
Transport and communications	14%	4%	5%	26%	51%
Voluntary sector	14%	0%	14%	43%	21%
Leisure services	12%	0%	0%	24%	59%
Central government	10%	7%	6%	35%	41%
Banking, finance and insurance	6%	0%	6%	38%	50%
Hotels and restaurants	0%	33%	33%	33%	0%

There are no industries where a majority of safety representatives said there had been an inspection in the last 12 months (Table 19). The industry most likely to have done so was agriculture and fishing (though there were only nine respondents from this sector), followed by manufacturing. In some industries, a great proportion of respondents said an inspection had never been carried out, as for example in the voluntary sector (43 per cent) and banking, finance and insurance (38 per cent) and central government (35 per cent).

Inspectors and safety representatives

Contact between safety representatives and inspectors is scarce, according to the survey.

Of those who could recall an inspection at all, fewer than half (42 per cent) said they or other safety reps had been notified of the visit before it took place – a figure that has fallen since the last survey (46 per cent). Only 34 per cent of them said they or another safety representative had spoken with the inspector on their most recent visit, a proportion slightly worse than the 36 per cent in 2022/23.

Improvements and enforcement action

The survey asked safety representatives whether their employers had made improvements to health and safety management – either because of the possibility of a visit by inspectors, or because of enforcement action taken against other employers, such as a notice or prosecution.

Table 24: Improvements because of the possibility of a visit

	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020/21	2022/23	2025
Not at all	26%	19%	22%	17%	14%	16%	17%
A little	18%	16%	19%	19%	20%	18%	18%
Somewhat	15%	20%	16%	21%	21%	20%	22%
A lot	20%	16%	17%	15%	14%	14%	14%
Don't know	22%	29%	26%	28%	32%	31%	28%

Table 24 indicates the extent to which safety representatives felt employers had made health and safety improvements because of the possibility of an inspection. The results suggest that that only a minority of respondents (36 per cent) felt their employer had made anything more than “a little” improvement – almost the same as two years ago.

The survey asked safety representatives about actual notices served. The majority of respondents said they did not know (55 per cent). Fifteen per cent of safety representatives said their employers have at some point received a legal enforcement notice. These proportions have not changed much since 2020/21 because of the persistently high proportion of reps who are not aware of whether notices have been issued.

Those who reported legal enforcement notices were able to comment on whether they or other safety representatives had been consulted about making improvements to comply with the notice. Out of those:

- 45 per cent said they or other safety reps knew about the notice and were consulted on improvements to comply with it;
- 29 per cent said they or other safety reps knew about the notice but were not consulted on improvements to comply with it; and
- 26 per cent said they or other reps did not know about the notice and were not consulted on improvements to comply with it.

The same group of respondents commented on the extent of their employer's response to the most recent notice. The results are set out below in order of declining thoroughness of employer response:

- 42 per cent of respondents said they complied with the notice and also reviewed other practices in different departments (37 per cent 2022/23);
- 10 per cent said they implemented best practice and the effect has lasted for at least several months but only in one work activity or area (10 per cent in 2022/23);
- 13 per cent said they implemented best practice, but the effect was short term and only affected one work activity or area (12 per cent in 2022/23); and
- 34 per cent said they did the minimum they could to comply with the notice (31 per cent in 2022/23).

There has been a slight increase in the proportion of employers reported to have made the most thorough improvements in response to an enforcement notice, but also a slight increase in those who did the minimum they could to comply, compared with two years ago.