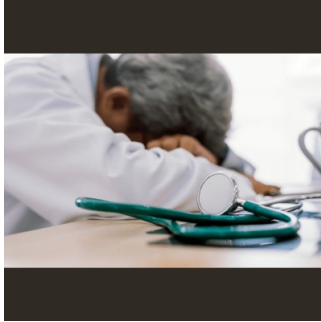


## Mental Health Crisis Among NHS Staff Amidst Staffing Shortages



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A recent study by the Unison union has shed light on a concerning trend within the NHS workforce. The research indicates that nearly one in three NHS employees has had to take time off work due to poor mental health over the past year. This survey, encompassing 12,000 health workers, underscores the severe impact of the ongoing staffing crisis, with many individuals reaching a state of burnout.

### Physical Toll of Stress and Mental Health Disruption on NHS Staff

The physical manifestations of stress are evident among NHS staff, with reported symptoms including panic attacks, high blood pressure, chest pains, and headaches. This distressing situation has been further exacerbated by the closure of more than half of the mental health hubs specifically launched for NHS workers in the wake of the pandemic, as reported by the British Psychological Society. The mounting pressures on the NHS workforce are not solely due to the staffing crisis but are also a result of the backlog of patients awaiting treatment. This backlog has placed additional strain on healthcare professionals, making it increasingly challenging for them to prioritise their own well-being.

### Lack of Transparency and Rising Work-Related Stress

Furthermore, the Unison survey revealed a troubling aspect of the work environment – one in five employees who took time off for mental health issues did not disclose the true reason for their absence. This lack of transparency stems from a perceived lack of support from employers, indicating a deeper issue of trust and communication within the healthcare system. Recent data from the NHS' official staff survey corroborates these findings, with 42% of staff reporting experiencing work-related stress and one-third stating that they often or always feel burnt out. Helga Pile, Unison's head of health, emphasised the critical need for employers to acknowledge and address the overwhelming pressures faced by all NHS staff, ranging from healthcare assistants to cleaners and paramedics.

### Funding Crisis Threatens Mental Health Hubs

Despite the establishment of 40 mental health and wellbeing hubs by the NHS in response to the pandemic, the cessation of national funding in March last year has led to the closure of 18 hubs, with an additional eight at risk of shutting down. The British Psychological Society has urgently called for government intervention to secure funding for these essential services.

In a separate development, while an agreement between the government and the British Medical Association regarding consultants' pay has been ratified, potentially averting strike actions by senior doctors, concerns persist regarding potential strikes by junior doctors.

Source: [The Independent](#)

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