



Stress Awareness Month 2022

Stress Awareness Month has been held every April since 1992 to raise awareness of the causes and cures for our modern stress epidemic. The last two years have been some of the most challenging we have all faced and as we come out of the pandemic it is more important than ever to provide help for those people who are struggling and in need of support. It is important to recognise when you are feeling stressed and burnt out, and there is lots of support available to us all. To make it easier for us to access the relevant support we need and to give us some ideas of how we can maintain our wellbeing, we've put together this information all in one place.

Please refer to DIOs [wellbeing page](#), our [wellbeing support information](#), and our [wellbeing channel](#) for information and support all year round.

Use the buttons below to access further information, resources, and activities.



The Charity for Civil Servants

The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) – Health Assured

Stress Awareness Month wellbeing safety moments

DIO Mental Health First Aiders

What is stress?

Stress is the body's reaction to feeling **threatened** or **under pressure**. It's very common and **can help** us meet the demands of home, work and family life.

But **too much stress** can affect our mood, our body and our relationships – especially when it feels **out of our control**. Experiencing a lot of stress over a long period of time can also lead to a feeling of physical, mental and emotional exhaustion, often called **burnout**.

Signs of stress or burnout:

- feeling **overwhelmed**
- **racing thoughts** or **difficulty concentrating**
- being **irritable**
- feeling constantly **worried, anxious** or **scared**
- lack of **self-confidence**
- trouble **sleeping** or feel **tired** all the time
- **avoiding** things/people you are having problems with
- **eating** more or less than usual
- **drinking** or **smoking** more than usual

Stress-Busting Resources and Information

Read the NHS [advice about stress](#) and [self-help guide](#)

Try out these [Easy Time-Management Tips](#)

Sign up to the Stress Management Society's [30 Day Challenge](#) and have a go at their [Individual Stress Test](#)

Take some deep breaths and try these [breathing exercises for stress](#)

Create a daily self-care routine using this [Self-Care Workbook](#)

Find out more about [how to be mentally healthy at work](#) from [Mind](#)

Find further information and support through [Time to Change](#), the [Mental Health Foundation](#) and the [Stress Management Society](#)

Listen to the [Wellbeing Coffee & Chat recording](#) about **Loneliness**, including lived experience and what you can do to make a difference

What's happening during the month?

Tuesday 5th April 10-11am: [Stress, Anxiety and Burnout Tips and Tools](#) with the Charity for Civil Servants

Join [any of the events](#) hosted by UK Strat Comm throughout the month, including workshops on **Resilience, Meditation and Psychological Health**

Monday 25th April 3-3:45pm: [Wellbeing Coffee and Chat](#) on the topic of burnout

Join one of the [free Mindfulness sessions](#) running for anyone in Defence every Monday, Wednesday and Friday

Look out for messages and join the conversation on the [Wellbeing Teams Channel](#)

Use our [Stress Awareness Month Safety Moments](#) in your team meetings



Stress Awareness Month 2022

We have some fantastic support available to us, it's important that you take some time to understand what support is offered and how you can access it.



Charity for Civil Servants

The Charity for Civil Servants is accessible to Civil Servants, former Civil Servants, and their dependants. They provide practical **financial and emotional support**.

If you are feeling stressed or burnt out, you don't need to face it alone. **Apply or call** Freephone 0800 056 2424, option 2, to talk to someone.

Visit the [Burnout Hub | The Charity for Civil Servants \(foryoubyyou.org.uk\)](https://www.burnouthub.org.uk) (includes a stress test, resilience kit, stress kit and resources for recognising burnout and creating balance.)

For some great **tips on how to avoid burnout** you can also access the charity's **on-demand webinar**.

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) Health Assured

The EAP services are accessible in different ways such as webinars, pod casts, health checks, 4-week programmes, as well as official telephone, video and face-to-face counselling services, and much more!

You can access many support services that may be of particular benefit if you are feeling stressed, we've outlined some of them below:

[Time Management Tips](#)

[Boosting resilience](#)

[Mental health at work](#)

[Mindfulness](#)

[Stress](#)

4 Week Programme: [Coping with pressure](#)

You can access a **wide variety of webinars** relating to topics including wellbeing, mental health, and the basics of money management. You may have to access these webinars via a personal device.

To find out more visit:

[Healthassured.eap.com](https://www.healthassured.eap.com)

Username: DIO Password: DIO

To use the MyHA app you will need the Unique code: MHA142565)



Mental Health
First Aider

MHFA England

Mental Health First Aiders

DIO has a network of Mental Health First Aiders spread across a wide range of departments and locations.

They are available to be contacted for **supportive conversations** with any colleague who may be experiencing emotional **distress** or have concerns about their **mental health**.

Mental Health First Aiders provide a friendly, empathetic, non-judgemental, active-listening ear to both **employees and line managers**, giving support in immediate situations and sign-posting to appropriate services.

Click here to find a DIO Mental Health First Aider

Safety Moment – Stress and Burnout

Top tips to deal with stress and burnout



Split up big tasks

If a task seems overwhelming and difficult to start, try breaking it down into easier chunks, and give yourself credit for completing them.



Allow yourself some positivity

Take time to think about the good things in your life. Each day, consider what went well and try to list 3 things you're thankful for.



Challenge your thoughts

The way we think affects the way we feel. Try re-framing your unhelpful thoughts by recognising and challenging them.



Be more active

Being active can help you to burn off nervous energy. It will not make your stress disappear, but it can make it less intense.



Talk to someone

Trusted friends, family and colleagues, or contacting a helpline, can help us when we are struggling.



Plan ahead

Planning out any upcoming stressful days or events – a to-do list, the journey you need to do, things you need to take – can really help.

Find further information and support from: [Burnout response for leaders](#), [NHS self-help guide](#), [Mind](#), [Time to Change](#), the [Mental Health Foundation](#) and the [Stress Management Society](#)

Safety moment – Top 10 Stress-Busting Tips

A little bit of stress can be good for us, but too much of it can have a negative impact on mental, emotional and physical health. Here are some suggested 10 stress-busting tips taken from the NHS website.

Be active	Exercise reduces the emotional intensity you're feeling, clearing your thoughts and letting you deal with your problems more calmly
Take control	There's a solution to any problem. If you remain passive, thinking, 'I can't do anything about my problem', your stress will get worse. The feeling of loss of control is one of the main causes of stress and lack of wellbeing. Taking control is in itself empowering and a crucial part of finding a solution
Connect with people	A good support network of colleagues, friends and family can ease your work troubles and help you see things in a different way. Talking things through with a friend will also help you find solutions to your problems
Have some 'me time'	We often don't spend enough time doing things we really enjoy. We all need to take some time for socialising, relaxation or exercise
Challenge yourself	Setting yourself goals and challenges, whether at work or outside, such as learning a new language or a new sport, helps build confidence. This will help you deal with stress
Avoid unhealthy habits	Don't rely on alcohol, smoking and caffeine as a way of coping. They may provide temporary relief but in the long term, these crutches don't solve your problems, they'll just create new ones. You need to tackle the cause of your stress
Help other people	Evidence shows that people who help others become more resilient. Helping people in situations worse than yours helps you put your problems into perspective. It can be something as small as going on a coffee run for colleagues
Work smarter, not harder	Working smarter means prioritising your work, concentrating on the tasks that make a real difference. Leave the last important tasks to last. Accept that your in-tray will always be full. Don't expect it to be empty at the end of the day.
Try to be positive	Look for the positives in life, and things for which you're grateful. People don't always appreciate what they have
Accept the things you can't change	Changing a difficult situation isn't always possible. Try to concentrate on the things you do have control over

Safety Moment – Personal Resilience and the Stress Battery Indicator

Ask yourself and your team some critical questions:

- How are you?
- Are you coping?
- What are your training needs?
- Have you taken your annual leave?

Take a moment now to consider where you **feature on the stress battery indicator**? How full are your batteries today?

- If you've had an early start or a particularly busy week, you may be feeling like you're already at **stage 5** – totally depleted.
- Others will recognise themselves in **particular stages at different times** (and across different periods of your career).

It's important that we're all **self-aware** –if we're consistently in the red categories we cannot realistically expect to work productively and set an example for others to do the same.

Want to know more?

Take the [NHS How Are You? Quiz](#)

If you are a leader, visit [Burnout response for leaders](#)

Have a look at the NHS [Top 10 Stress-Busting Tips](#)

Create a daily self-care routine using this [Self-Care Workbook](#)

How full are your batteries?

Stage 1



- Sufficient energy levels
- Good work/life balance

Stage 2



- Loss of energy/enthusiasm
- Doubts about coping
- Working extended hours
- Unable to refuse more work

Stage 3



- Tiredness and anxiety
- Feelings of stagnation
- Bouts of irritation
- Too busy to take leave

Stage 4



- Lowered self-esteem
- Growing guilt
- Apathy
- Extreme exhaustion

Stage 5



- Illness
- Extreme personal distress
- Avoiding colleagues
- Reluctance to communicate
- Feelings of failure

REMEMBER– Everyone needs to recharge before we hit empty...