

The threat to health and safety

Act now to fight the government cuts

What's changing?

Workplace health and safety is under greater threat now than at any other time. The government is putting the lives and health of UNISON members at risk by cutting the Health and Safety Executive's funding, and significantly reducing the number of workplace inspections.

Good health and safety practices are essential to reduce injuries and ill health in our workplaces. We're now facing a situation where hard-won health and safety legislation is on the chopping block and people are becoming more vulnerable to issues such as stress, bullying and violence.

It is estimated that 500,000 public sector workers are set to lose their jobs in the coming months, with many more at risk of redundancy. When employees are scared about keeping their jobs, they are less likely to raise concerns about health and safety. In addition, we are facing an epidemic of sickness presence, where workers continue to turn up at work despite being ill. The impact of this is that work places become both more dangerous and unhealthier.

Many UNISON workplaces are now classed as 'low-risk' – meaning that the HSE is withdrawing proactive inspections from these workplaces entirely. These visits are successful at reducing workplace injury and ill-health. Studies show that over 90% of employers improve their health and safety policies either immediately before or after an inspection. These inspections should continue to ensure the health and safety of UNISON members.

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What you can do

As members, activists and safety representatives there are many ways you can challenge these changes:

- Please encourage members to keep on reporting and recording health and safety incidents.
- Raise your concerns about the cuts to the H&S budget with your local MP.
- Tell the media your story, publicise how the H&S cuts are affecting people in your workplace.

Find resources and other ways to support our campaigns at unison.co.uk/healthandsafety or speak to your local safety representative or steward.

