



Top Health News

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Creaking public services are costing companies in absent staff, employers tell TUC

UK businesses are losing staff working time because of waits for healthcare or caring duties due to underfunded public services, according to a poll of managers before Chancellor Rachel Reeves' first budget.

More than half of 500 UK business leaders polled for the TUC said workers had to take time off in the last year because of problems accessing public services.

Labour party sources have said the government is looking for a combined £40bn in tax rises and spending cuts in the budget on Wednesday. At least part of the tax rises are expected to be spent on increased investment to boost the UK's meagre productivity and economic

growth since the financial crisis of 2008.

Reeves has also said the government will borrow to spend on "national renewal" after years of what Labour describes as underinvestment in the public sector. Her Conservative predecessor, Jeremy Hunt, has argued that extra borrowing would mean higher interest rates and "punish families with mortgages".

The TUC said the extent of time lost to public service pressures showed that the government should spend more on repairing services. While higher taxes tend to be unpopular with businesses, the union body argued that better public services would help UK companies to grow by allowing workers to be more

productive.

The polling, carried out by Opinium, suggested that 35% of business leaders – ranging from small business owners up to management of large businesses – had staff absent while waiting for hospital treatment, and 17% for mental health treatment.

The Institute for Public Policy Research, a thinktank with close links to Labour, has previously argued that poor health is holding back the UK economy. It said last month that the 900,000 people lost to the labour force since the coronavirus pandemic would cost HMRC £5bn in lost revenue this year.

[Jasper Jolly, The Guardian](#)

Norovirus surge in the UK: How to protect yourself this autumn

Brits are being alerted to a severe illness that is striking earlier and affecting more people than usual this autumn.

The highly contagious norovirus bug, typically seen in the winter months, has made an early appearance this year, according to experts.

NHS data reveals that infections have surged by 29 per cent between September 23 and October 6, a shocking increase that is double the usual outbreak level expected for this period of the year.

Here's everything you need to know about the virus and how to prepare for the outbreak and safeguard yourself and

your loved ones. Norovirus has deeply unpleasant symptoms and leaves sufferers unable to do much beyond rest and wait for the worst of the illness to pass.

The three main symptoms of this stomach bug are feeling nauseous, experiencing diarrhoea, and then actually vomiting, CoventryLive reports, reports the Mirror.

Headaches, aches and pains in your arms and legs and a high temperature are also commonly experienced by sufferers. These can come on suddenly a day or two after you have been exposed to the illness.

The primary advice when suffering from

norovirus is to maintain your fluid intake, as you'll be losing a lot of it through two of the three main symptoms. Small sips might be the best approach to prevent a sensitive stomach from reacting.

To steer clear of the dreaded norovirus, pay close attention to high-touch areas like door handles and maintain good hand hygiene.

Health experts are urging a strict 48-hour self-isolation period following the onset of symptoms to prevent the bug's spread in workplaces and schools. It is also advised to avoid visiting healthcare facilities and care homes to minimise the risk of transmitting the virus to more susceptible individuals.

[Joe Smith & Isabelle Bates, Devon Live](#)

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER



NHS in England to trial AI tool to predict risk of fatal heart disease

[Click on the orange text for full article](#)

The NHS in England is to trial a “superhuman” artificial intelligence tool that predicts a patient’s risk of disease and dying early.

The new technology, known as AI-ECG risk estimation, or Aire, is trained to read the results of electrocardiogram (ECG) tests, which record the electrical activity of the heart and are used to check for problems.

It can detect problems in the structure of the heart that doctors would not be able to see, and flag patients who may benefit from further monitoring, tests or treatment.

In a world first, it will initially be trialled at Imperial College Healthcare NHS trust and Chelsea and Westminster hospital

NHS foundation trust, before being tested in other hospitals. It is understood hundreds of patients will be recruited in the first instance, with numbers then scaled up for further studies.

Research published in the Lancet Digital Health journal found Aire could correctly identify a patient’s risk of death in the 10 years after the ECG in 78% of cases.

Researchers trained Aire using a dataset of 1.16m ECG test results from 189,539 patients.

The platform could also predict future heart failure in 79% of cases, future serious heart rhythm problems in 76% of cases, and future atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease – where the arteries narrow, making blood flow

difficult – in 70% of cases.

Dr Fu Siong Ng, a reader in cardiac electrophysiology at Imperial College London and a consultant cardiologist at Imperial College Healthcare NHS trust, said: “The vision is every ECG that will be done in hospital will be put through the model. So anyone who has an ECG anywhere in the NHS in 10 years’ time, or five years’ time, would be put through the models and the clinicians will be informed, not just about what the diagnosis is, but a prediction of a whole range of health risks, which means that we can then intervene early and prevent disease.

[Andrew Gregory, The Guardian](#)

Mpox: First case of Clade 1b strain detected in London

A case of a new strain of mpox has been detected in the UK for the first time, it has been announced.

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) said a single case of the mpox virus variant Clade 1b was detected in London.

There was no evidence of community transmission from the patient, who is being treated at the Royal Free Hospital in London.

The person involved had been on holiday in Africa and travelled back to the UK on an overnight flight on 21 October.

The case was confirmed to the UKHSA on Tuesday.

Recipe of the Month - Cheesy baked beans

- 1 tsp rapeseed oil
- 1 small red onion
- 2 garlic cloves
- ½ tsp smoked paprika
- 1 can borlotti beans
- 1 tbs tomato purée
- 1 can chopped tomatoes
- 1 tbs red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp brown sugar
- 100g vegetarian medium cheddar
- Handful fresh parsley
- Bread to serve

To see the method for this recipe, and for more recipes from Corrie, sign into www.heales.com and click on Healthy Eating Blog.



Blog and Photo credit: Corrie Heale

More than 24 hours later, they developed flu-like symptoms and on 24 October, started to develop a rash which got worse in the following days.

When they attended A&E in London on 27 October, they were swabbed, tested and then isolated while waiting for their results.

Fewer than 10 direct contacts are being traced after the discovery, and Professor

Susan Hopkins, chief medical adviser at UKHSA, said the “risk to the UK population remains low”.

“It is thanks to our surveillance that we have been able to detect this virus,” she said.

This is the first time Clade 1b has been detected in the UK. Germany reported its first Clade 1b case earlier this month.

[Mickey Carroll, Sky News](#)

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER



UK regulator tells doctors to watch out for obesity injection misuse

The UK's drug safety regulator is asking doctors to be alert for patients who may be misusing obesity injections, such as Wegovy.

It follows reports of some people who are not obese becoming sick, after using the jabs for weight loss.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) stresses that the drugs are only meant for treating obesity and diabetes.

Health Secretary Wes Streeting has

backed the call, saying the drugs are "serious medicines" and not "for people to get a body beautiful picture for Instagram".

While most side-effects are mild, some can be serious, says the MHRA.

It adds that the drugs should only be prescribed by a registered healthcare professional.

When appropriately used, in line with the product licence, the benefits of these medications outweigh the risks for

patients, says the regulator.

But this benefit-risk balance is positive only for those patients within the approved indications for weight management or type 2 diabetes, as described in the product information.

Dr Alison Cave, MHRA Chief Safety Officer, said all medicines carry a risk of potential side-effects: "We encourage healthcare professionals to ensure patients being treated with these medicines are aware of the common side-effects and how to minimise risk."

The most common side-effects include feeling sick, vomiting, bloating, constipation and diarrhoea.

Dr Vicky Price, president of the Society for Acute Medicine, told the BBC she had seen patients who weren't overweight coming in with issues.

Elena Bailey, BBC News

Workout of the month - Kettlebell workout

Exercises

1. Squat to press
2. Deadlift
3. Split squat
4. KB Swings

To see the Carys performing the workout, and for details on how to do the exercises, log on to the Heales Medical Health and Wellbeing portal and check out the workout on our homepage.



UK government urged to stop changing the clocks by British Sleep Society

A group of scientists and doctors have instructed the government to abolish the UK's twice-yearly clock changes.

The time swap, set to happen on Sunday, is harming the nation's sleep, the British Sleep Society (BSS) has warned.

Members of BSS said evidence clearly shows that natural daylight in the morning is good for sleep patterns, while changing the clocks has a negative impact.

They argue circadian rhythms - the physical, mental, and behavioural changes we experience over 24 hours - are most impacted by clocks moving

forward in the spring.

The society has issued a statement saying it "strongly recommends" that Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) runs consistently throughout the year.

The call comes as clocks are due to go back this weekend. It is understood the Government has no plans to change the daylight savings system.

Currently, GMT begins on the last Sunday in October, when clocks go back one hour at 2am (meaning an extra hour in bed) and runs until British Summer Time (BST) starts on the last Sunday in March, when clocks go forward at 1am.

The statement comes from academics from across the UK, led by Dr Megan Crawford of the University of Strathclyde, Dr Eva Winnebeck of the University of Surrey, and Professor Malcolm von Schantz of Northumbria University.

Prof von Schantz said GMT aligns closely with the natural light-dark cycles of the day and night. "Natural daylight in the morning is crucial for maintaining an optimal alignment of our body clocks with day and night, which is essential for optimal sleep and overall health".

Jane Kirby, Independent

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER



Health Promotion and Education

Heales Medical can help advise and manage proactive health promotion days that will encourage employees to adopt healthier lifestyles.

Our health promotion days specialise in the prevention of ill health and the promotion of health & well-being within your organisation.

Our services are delivered by high calibre, well qualified staff with a broad experience base and all results are assessed against National Clinical Guidelines.

During each assessment, the health professional will ask lifestyle questions about the employee's general health and give health advice.

After each assessment we will be able to provide results, advice and an information pack.

If you have any queries or are interested in having an event, please contact a Heales Occupational Health Advisor or Contract Manager for further information.



- ✓ Advice of physical activity
- ✓ Advice on healthy eating
- ✓ Advice on weight management
- ✓ Advice on stress management
- ✓ Advice on smoking, alcohol & drugs
- ✓ Understanding blood pressure
- ✓ Understanding blood cholesterol

Health and Wellbeing Portal

For more resources see our Health and Wellbeing Portal!

Our portal has a wide range of information, tips and advice to help you support your health and wellbeing, including:

- Health Promotion Blog
- COVID-19 advice
- Health & healthy eating tips
- Health Newsletter archive
- Healthy lifestyle & exercise blog
- Vegetarian blog
- Accessible apps
- Specific information and tip pages for injury, illness and disability in daily life and in the workplace
- Occupational Health information

Pages and information will be updated and added to continually, if you have any suggestions, let us know at carys.swanton@heales.com.

Health Promotion Calendar

Click on the event to go to their website.

NOVEMBER

November, Men's Health Awareness Month

[1/11/24-30/11/24](#)

Mouth Cancer Action Month

[1/11/24-30/11/24](#)

Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month

[1/11/24-30/11/24](#)

UK Malnutrition Awareness Week

[06/11/24-12/11/24](#)

World Diabetes Day

[14/11/24](#)

World COPD Day

[15/11/24](#)

International Stress Awareness Week

[30/10/24-3/11/24](#)

DECEMBER

World Aids Day

[01/12/24](#)

Anger Awareness Week

[01/12/24-7/12/24](#)

International Day of People with Disabilities

[03/12/24](#)

JANUARY

Dry January

[01/01/2025-31/01/2025](#)

Cervical Cancer Prevention Week

[20/01/25-26/01/25](#)