

# Public sector workers sleep-deprived, says study

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Research led by the University of Leeds has found those working gruelling hours across the public sector are being left sleep deprived – with many only managing six hours sleep per night.

A study commissioned and funded by Silentnight found nearly a third of Britons suffered from sleepless nights as a result of long work hours and job-related pressure and stress.

People employed in the [public sector](#) – including workers in education, health, and local government – slept for six hours a night on average, below the NHS recommendation of seven to eight hours per night.

A quarter of those working in [social care](#) suffered from dangerously low averages of five hours or less per night.

The research found those working in high-pressure business management or consultancy roles also suffered from extremely low levels of [sleep](#) - with half of those surveyed getting five hours or less sleep per night.

Those working in sports, fitness and tourism were among the best sleepers in Britain, with most of those surveyed maintaining a healthy seven to eight hours sleep a night, and reporting [higher levels](#) of [job satisfaction](#) and lower levels of work related stress.

One in five people reported serious issues related to tiredness - including problems staying awake, socialising, feeling enthusiastic about day-to-day tasks, driving and maintaining concentration.

About 21% reported that they worked over 40 hours a week and 30% reported that their work negatively affected their sleep.

Those who considered their jobs to be stressful were significantly more likely to take longer to fall asleep, to be unhappy with their sleep and to sleep less. Both lack of sleep and stress at work are associated with reduced health-related quality of life.

Dr Anna Weighall, of the School of Psychology at the University of Leeds, who led the study, said: "With nearly a quarter of British people reporting working over 40 hours a week, the public sector included, work life balance appears to be challenging for many, especially when it comes to maintaining their sleep.

"There is certainly evidence to suggest that significant numbers of participants perceive work as negatively affecting their sleep.

"What is interesting is our research reveals a resounding message that while some jobs may be better than others for our sleep health, there is a worrying trend evident across all sectors that actually workers are suffering from consistently low levels of sleep.

"The extent to which our work is stressful and working long hours seem to be important factors associated with poor sleep. And in many cases British people are sleeping below the recommended amount.

"Given that good sleep health has been shown to be crucial for our health and wellbeing this is a real public health issue.

"Many respondents reported [work](#) and job-related stress impacted on their sleep, with 42% of the people we spoke to branding their job stressful, it is unsurprising sleep patterns are affected."

Provided by University of Leeds

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