



What to expect in health and safety in 2025



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Blamed for everything from stopping fun events to banning conkers, health and safety legislation is more often portrayed as a grumpy killjoy than the reason the United Kingdom has one of the lowest workplace mortality rates in Europe. Like it or not, health and safety is of the utmost importance in the UK and there is a range of legislation created with the aim of establishing health and safety culture within UK workplaces. In turn, health and safety must be at the top of the priority list for organisations of any size that have employees (and even if you're self-employed!) because, well, first of all, it's the law, and moreover, there are actually a slew of concrete benefits for employer and employee alike.

As we approach 2025, businesses must adapt to evolving standards and regulatory updates in workplace safety. With significant changes in workplace dynamics, including the rise of hybrid working, a renewed focus on mental health, as well as the Labour's promise of the New Deal for Working People, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and other regulatory bodies emphasise that businesses not only comply with legal requirements but also foster a proactive safety culture.

Stopping fires before they start

Fire safety remains a top priority in 2025, with significant changes stemming from the [Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 Report](#), the continued [rollout of fire safety reforms](#), and growing attention to emerging risks like [lithium-ion battery fires](#). Over a year since the enhanced obligations under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 came into effect, many [Responsible Persons](#) still face challenges, particularly around fire risk assessments. With regulators increasingly scrutinising compliance, businesses must ensure fire safety strategies are robust and well-documented to avoid breaches. Additionally, [training](#) should be provided to all employees and reviewed regularly to ensure that everyone knows what to do in the event of a fire.

The risks associated with lithium-ion batteries gained considerable focus throughout 2024 following several high-profile fires in the [UK](#) and [abroad](#). While regulation is still evolving—including the Lithium-Ion Battery Safety Bill currently under review—duty holders are expected to proactively manage these hazards, particularly on construction sites, where the London Fire Brigade has issued specific [safety guidance](#). Industries utilising electric vehicles, e-bikes, or energy storage systems must prioritise fire risk mitigation and ensure workers are trained to handle such incidents.

In residential settings, fire safety requirements are tightening further. From March 2025, all new-build care homes in England will be required to include fire sprinklers, enhancing protection for vulnerable residents. Additionally, the Government's proposed new [Residential PEEP \(Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans\) policy](#) will mandate clearer evacuation strategies for high-rise residential buildings and flats with simultaneous evacuation plans. This includes identifying at-risk residents, sharing information with local fire services, and implementing person-centred fire risk assessments to improve emergency response.

Further, the [updated fire safety standard \(BS 9991:2024\)](#) introduces revised technical guidance for residential buildings, including stricter measures for single-stair buildings, sprinkler installations, and evacuation lift recommendations. Coupled with the Government's [Remediation Acceleration Plan](#) to speed up the removal of unsafe cladding by 2029, organisations involved in construction, building management, and refurbishment must stay informed and act decisively to comply with evolving standards.



Be prepared for anything

The past few years have seen a volatile period of global instability and have shown us how profoundly global crises can suddenly reshape our lives, affecting health, security, and economies in unprecedented ways. These crises have exposed vulnerabilities and emphasised that the need for emergency response planning is more critical than ever for UK businesses in 2025.

Workplaces must prepare for a wide range of potential crises—ranging from public health emergencies and fires to civil unrest, environmental disasters, and even terror threats.

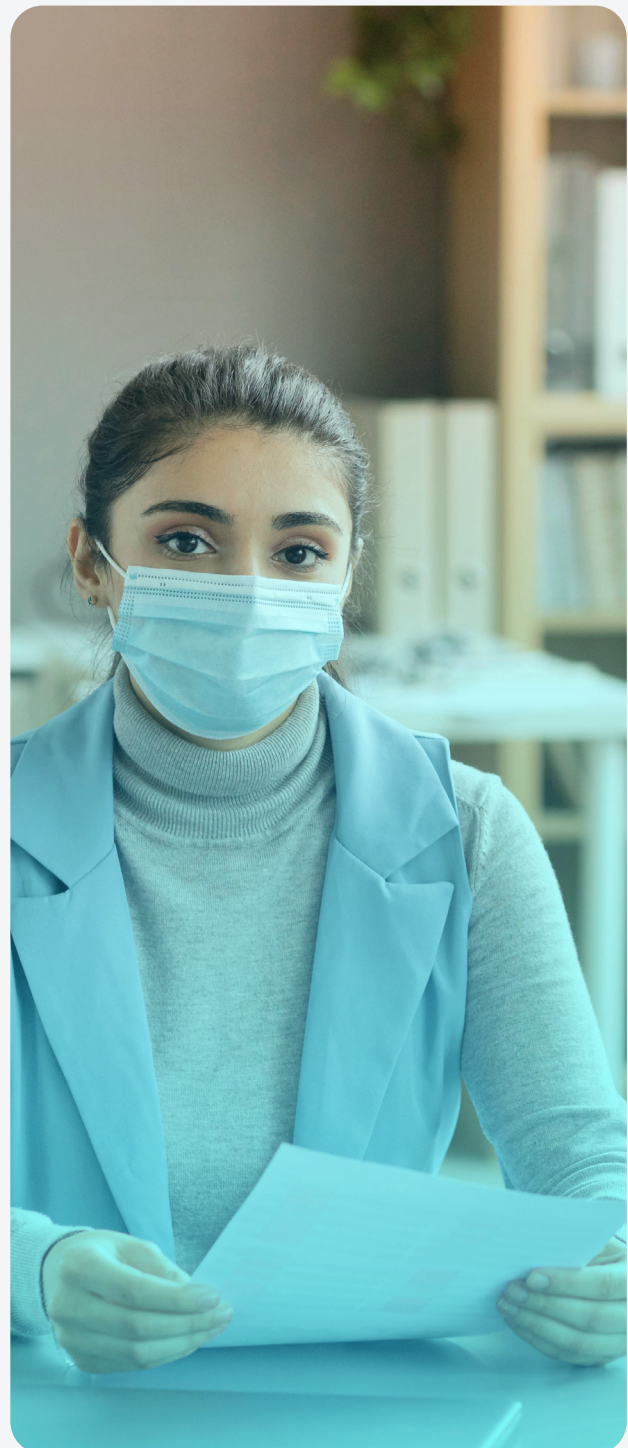
According to recent data, work-related injuries and fatalities remain a pressing concern, with over [100 fatalities reported in 2023/24](#).

Businesses need to be ready not just for standard emergencies but also for events such as natural disasters, protests, or terror threats. Civil unrest or large-scale protests near the workplace could lead to serious disruptions. Businesses should have lockdown procedures in place, as well as communication channels for real-time updates in an emergency.

Companies are also increasingly expected to be prepared for environmental risks—whether floods, storms and hurricanes, or extreme temperatures and wildfires—that could disrupt operations. [Climate-related incidents are expected to rise](#) as the frequency of extreme weather events increases.

Beyond physical dangers, clear response strategies for medical emergencies like heart attacks or injuries must be part of a comprehensive plan, including trained first responders, automated external defibrillators (AEDs), and access to emergency contacts.

Disasters or human emergencies usually do not arrive with advance warning, but by implementing regular drills and ensuring staff are trained in both physical and digital emergency protocols, businesses can keep their teams safe and minimally affected by whatever 2025 may bring.



What's the deal with the New Deal: The Employment Rights Bill



In the lead up to the UK's general election last July, Labour promised to support working people by improving their terms and conditions and ensuring protections at work. They contended that Conservative party failed in these efforts and that they play to deliver the biggest upgrade to rights at work for a generation. In that vein, Labour introduced the ['New Deal for Working People'](#).

In practice, the pledge has been introduced in the form of the [Employment Rights Bill](#). The Bill includes sweeping changes to workers rights including an expansion of day one rights, sick pay, limits to probation period, guaranteed working hours for zero-hour contracts, severely limiting fire and rehire practices, making flexible working the default "where practical," the creation of a worker's rights enforcement body, to be called the "Fair Work Agency", and improvements to minimum wage.

How does the Bill compare to Labour's original promises?

With the publishing of the bill on 10 October 2024, Labour did deliver on its commitment to put legislation before Parliament on its 'Plan to Make Work Pay' within 100 days of entering office. But while the Bill does provide a general framework for an eventual overhaul of the employment landscape, the measures outlined in the draft legislation do not require employers to make the immediate and wide-reaching changes to policies and procedures which might have been expected based on pledges in the lead up to the General Election—much of the changes will take more than two years to consult on and implement.

Moreover, a significant number of original proposals were left out of the Bill all together, including, crucially, the proposed shift to a two part-framework of employment status, with the Labour government pledging to implement its further proposals after concluding extensive reviews and consultations with stakeholders. Still, a document is planned that promises to implement at least 30 more proposals that include additional worker protections.

As the various parts of the Bill come together and are implemented over the next year plus, it will begin to reshape the UK employment landscape, making it essential for businesses to stay ahead in the form of their own policies and training.

Mental health overhaul

In 2025, health and safety regulations are evolving to prioritise mental well-being alongside physical safety—a critical shift, given that work-related stress, depression, or anxiety [affected nearly 850,000 UK workers](#) in 2022–23, according to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). For businesses, this means expanding safety protocols to address not only physical hazards but also psychological well-being, creating a balanced, proactive approach.

The new Labour government has pledged to make wide reaching changes to mental health policies in the UK, including expanding the mental health workforce with at least 8,500 more staff over the next five years. Labour has also committed to provide specialist mental health professionals in all schools, and to invest in open-access mental health hubs in every community as part of its Young Futures programme in order to increase the availability of mental health support across the country.

In addition, Labour has promised to modernise the Mental Health Act, improve employment support for disabled people and speed up the Access to Work scheme, ensuring that people with mental health difficulties get the right employment support.

What should businesses be doing to comply with what's coming in 2025? Risk assessments are central to compliance, but they now go beyond machinery and manual tasks to include mental health risks. HSE guidelines recommend regular stress assessments, ensuring that workplace pressures don't negatively impact employees. As hybrid and remote work continue to shape modern workplaces, businesses must implement strategies to keep employees safe, wherever they're working. Clear

policies, regular check-ins, and [stress-management resources](#) can go a long way in supporting well-being.

Furthermore, the rise of [digital compliance tools](#) enables businesses to streamline health and safety reporting and training, ensuring quick access to resources and compliance checks. Investing in these areas not only ensures regulatory compliance but also fosters a culture of care that can boost employee satisfaction and productivity. This holistic approach to safety will be vital for a modern, resilient workforce that is in line with the latest policies.



Compliance everywhere



As remote and hybrid work becomes a standard in 2025, UK businesses face new compliance challenges, especially regarding health and safety, data security, and employment contracts. A [People Management poll](#) found that three quarters of employees say flexible working is more important to them when considering a new role than pay rise, yet this shift to more flexible working policies demands careful planning to ensure regulations are met across dispersed workspaces.

Health and Safety Compliance must now include home environments, with employers responsible for assessing risks even in remote settings. This means providing [ergonomic guidance](#), setting up virtual check-ins, and offering mental health resources.

Data Security is another top priority here. With employees accessing company systems remotely, maintaining robust cybersecurity is essential. Regular software updates, secure VPNs, and multi-factor authentication help minimise risks of data breaches, which cost UK businesses upwards of [£3 million per incident in 2023-24](#).

Employment Contracts must also reflect hybrid work arrangements. As flexible working arrangements increasingly become the norm, clarity on expectations, such as required in-office days, equipment provisions, and allowable expenses, is crucial to help prevent misunderstandings. For compliance, contracts should outline health and safety protocols and reinforce data security responsibilities.

Older and wiser?



In a [youth-obsessed culture](#), it's no surprise that the working world is often somewhat hostile to older workers. Older workers offer decades of work experience and knowledge and can play a central role in supporting organisational culture, resiliency and success, but they are often sidelined due to stereotypes. The fact is that the UK workforce is ageing, and there is a serious need for businesses to be more inclusive and meet the needs of older employees. An ONS Labour Force Survey found that [one in three workers in the UK is aged 50 or over](#). By 2025, this demographic is expected to grow further as people retire later, contributing experience and skill but also requiring tailored support to stay safe and productive at work.

One key area is ergonomic support—workspaces that reduce strain, especially for those who may be dealing with joint pain or reduced mobility. Simple adjustments, like adjustable desks and seating, help maintain comfort and reduce injury risk. Health and safety

protocols should also prioritise training around physical strain and flexibility to accommodate different abilities and needs.

Flexible working arrangements are crucial for supporting older employees. Part-time hours, phased retirements, and hybrid options allow older workers to continue contributing while managing other needs such as medical appointments or caring responsibilities. In fact, [a report revealed](#) that nearly 75% of over-50s say flexibility in their work allows them to achieve a better work-life balance.

Knowledge retention programs, like mentorship roles, allow older employees to pass on expertise, benefiting the entire workforce. By addressing the unique needs of an ageing workforce, businesses can improve retention, enhance productivity, and foster a multigenerational workplace that is valuable to both employees and their employers.

Psychological safety and political disagreements at work




Psychological safety in the workplace has become an increasingly important focus as employees' personal beliefs, including political or social views, are more openly expressed in today's workplace culture. While employees have always held diverse views, the rise of social media, political movements, and more open conversations around diversity and inclusion have amplified the visibility of personal beliefs. This shift means employers are now more frequently required to address the intersection of personal beliefs and professional environments.

The Equality Act 2010 provides protection against discrimination based on philosophical beliefs, including political ones, as long as these beliefs meet certain criteria. The legal test for whether a belief amounts to a 'philosophical belief' was set out in the case of [Grainger plc v Nicholson](#) in 2010. This case questioned whether an employee's belief in climate change

could amount to a 'philosophical belief' and consequently be afforded protection under the Equality Act 2010. The Employment Appeals Tribunal concluded that if the belief in question [meets certain criteria](#), it would be considered a philosophical belief and protected under the Equality Act. However, issues can arise when an employee's personal belief clashes with the rights or identities of others, particularly when it comes to gender identity, religion, or race.

Employers must navigate this area carefully: cases of this sort are complex, risk discrimination claims, and are hard for employers to get right. While fostering a culture of openness and inclusion is vital, it is equally important to ensure that political or philosophical beliefs do not lead to harassment or discrimination. In 2025, employers should make sure they're doing everything they can to manage these situations as best as possible: the costs of getting it wrong can be significant, as well as cause reputational damage. Begin by avoiding knee-jerk reactions and don't hesitate to ask for advice. Make sure any disciplinary action is proportionate, and always consider whether a less severe sanction is appropriate. Remember to take context into account. Finally, training for staff on freedom of expression and protected beliefs can go a long way in making sure organisations and employees are able to manage these complex situations more sensitively and effectively.



As we approach 2025, workplace health and safety continues to evolve in response to new challenges and societal expectations. From legislative changes like the Employment Rights Bill to the growing focus on mental health, hybrid work, and inclusivity for diverse employee needs, businesses must be proactive and address these issues head on to ensure compliance and foster a safe and supportive environment. Addressing critical issues such as menopause accommodations, older workers, emergency preparedness, and psychological safety not only promotes well-being but also strengthens organisational resilience. Organisations that proactively prioritise these areas in 2025 will be on their way to building workplaces that are safer, more inclusive, and better equipped to handle complexities of the present and near future.

How VinciWorks can help

All businesses have a legal responsibility for the welfare of their staff, making Health and Safety training a necessary consideration regardless of industry.

And, while eLearning is an efficient and cost effective way to deliver that training, to fully minimise workplace injuries and risk, businesses need to create a Health and Safety culture – a culture in which staff behaviour is aligned with Health and Safety training, and correct procedures are naturally integrated rather than seen as an unnecessary offshoot of a box-ticking exercise.

VinciWorks' [Workplace Safety courses](#) are IOSH approved, CPD certified and RoSPA assured. They cater for the flexibility and needs of your business, adaptable to your own requirements with every word customisable. Deliver training with short, interactive units relevant to each specific workplace environment and job role.

In addition, UK law mandates that employers report serious workplace accidents, occupational diseases, and near misses. Ensuring all incidents are properly recorded and follow-up actions are taken is crucial to mitigating future risks and maintaining a safe workplace.

Omnitrack's [Health and Safety Incident Management Tool](#) simplifies recording and managing incidents, aligning with HSE guidelines. It features a fully customisable workflow, automated flagging for serious incidents, and real-time reporting, enhancing compliance and safety without the need for extensive administrative effort.

About us

We believe compliance enables business. Compliance is an opportunity to be one step ahead, so your organisation can focus on advancing the business.

For over 20 years, VinciWorks has been at the leading edge of re-envisioning compliance tools and training. Our creative and driven team works hard everyday, challenging the traditional compliance industry to become forward-thinking, interactive and engaging. From our vast library of 800+ courses, to the award-winning Omnitrack training and compliance management software, to a curated catalogue of world class resources, VinciWorks is here to support your organisation every step of the way.

We constantly have our finger on the pulse, being the first to adapt our products to new regulations and market changes that impact our customers' businesses. Our flexible solutions ensure that every one of our products is tailored to our customers' unique business needs, placing them at the heart of everything we do.



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