



HSE Focus Newsletter

What Office-Based Businesses Need to Know

As we head into 2026, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is placing increased emphasis on work-related ill health, mental wellbeing, and competence across all sectors — including office-based environments.

Inspections this year will look beyond the paperwork — focusing heavily on how well health and safety is embedded into day-to-day operations, even in lower-risk workplaces.

HSE Priority Areas for Office Businesses in 2026

The HSE will focus on the following key areas during inspections:



Work-Related Ill Health:
Stress & MSK Risks



Mental Health &
Wellbeing Expectations



Competence & Training



Risk Assessments &
Practical Implementation



Workplace Environment
& Health



Staying Ahead of
Regulatory Changes

The Key Message for 2026

Health and safety must be **proportionate, well documented and clearly communicated** — even in lower-risk environments. The HSE expects proactive management of wellbeing and workplace risks.

Priority Areas: What You Need to Do Now

Below is a practical summary of what the HSE is prioritising for office-based businesses, and how you can prepare.



Work-Related Ill Health: Stress, Workload & Musculoskeletal Risks

In 2024/25, stress and MSK disorders were among the leading causes of lost working days. For 2026, HSE has made psychosocial risk management a key priority for all businesses — not only high-risk industries.

What you should consider now:

- Review DSE assessments and workstation ergonomics
- Implement clear workload and wellbeing support processes
- Monitor and record early signs of strain or fatigue



Mental Health & Wellbeing Expectations

HSE will look at how employers identify, manage and support mental wellbeing in the workplace — including policies, training and communication channels.

Actions to take:

- Ensure managers are trained in recognising stress indicators
- Incorporate wellbeing checks into 1-to-1s and team meetings
- Promote open communication and encourage early reporting of concerns



Competence & Training

Competence remains a legal requirement across all industries. Inspectors will expect to see up-to-date training, role-specific awareness, and clear evidence that employees understand their responsibilities.

Strengthening your position:

- Update training matrices and refresher periods (e.g., fire warden, first aid, DSE)
- Review induction content for new starters and remote workers
- Ensure leadership communicates safety expectations clearly

Risk Assessments & Practical Implementation

Risk assessments must be proportionate to the risks but still active documents. HSE will be checking that businesses review them regularly and apply them in real practice.



Best practice:

- Review assessments annually or when staff, layout or processes change
- Communicate findings clearly to staff
- Ensure emergency procedures — fire, evacuation, first aid — are well understood

Workplace Environment & Health

Even in offices, environmental factors such as lighting, ventilation, noise and temperature affect wellbeing and productivity. HSE inspectors may examine how these factors contribute to health risks.



What to review:

- Ensure adequate ventilation and thermal comfort
- Address persistent noise issues (open plan offices, HVAC)
- Keep welfare facilities clean, accessible and well maintained

Staying Ahead of the 2026 Regulatory Landscape

With broader regulatory changes underway — such as building safety reforms and strengthened focus on ill health prevention — all businesses benefit from reviewing their existing health and safety arrangements.



Your next steps:

- Refresh policies to reflect modern risks such as hybrid working and wellbeing
- Review emergency, security and evacuation plans
- Ensure leadership understands their legal duties

Helping You Stay Compliance-Ready

As part of our retained consultancy support, we can assist with:

- Full health and safety management reviews
- DSE, wellbeing and organisational stress guidance
- Competency and training programme development
- Policy updates and ongoing advisory support

Prepare for 2026 inspections.

