**THURSDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2024**

**Preventable accidents cost the UK £12 billion each year and prevent economic growth**

* Accidental death rate is up by 42% over the last decade, with accidents at home, on the road and in public far higher than those in work
* UK loses 29 million workdays per year due to accidents, 10 times more than strikes
* Accidents cost £6 billion in NHS medical care and £5.9 billion in lost working days
* The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) today launches [‘Safer Lives, Stronger Nation’](https://www.rospa.com/campaigns-and-fundraising/current-campaigns/national-accident-prevention-strategy/report), which reveals new data into rising accident numbers and calls on the Government to implement a National Accident Prevention Strategy to save lives, boost the economy and free up capacity in the NHS

As well as the tragic human loss and individual suffering, preventable accidents come at a huge economic cost to the whole country, totalling a massive £12 billion every year through lost working days and NHS medical care, according to a new report\* from The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA).

RoSPA’s new report, ‘Safer Lives, Stronger Nation’, shows accidental deaths in the UK have reached an all-time high and the numbers of accidents continue to rise. RoSPA is calling on the Government to implement a National Accident Prevention Strategy to save lives, boost the economy and free up capacity in the NHS.

**Accidents cost the NHS £6 billion every year**

Preventable accidents are putting a huge strain on the NHS, using up 4.4 million bed days to treat patients in England alone in 2022/23 and costing the NHS an estimated £4.6 billion. Across the UK, accident-related injuries are using up 5.2 million bed days, costing a total of £5.4 billion, which could be directed to treat other serious illnesses.

On top of this, accidents are also causing around 7 million A&E attendances across the UK, costing a further £613 million, bringing the total cost of accidents to the NHS to at least £6 billion annually. This doesn’t include ambulance call outs, more complex A&E visits, surgery and long-term or out-of-hospital treatment.

**Ten times more working days lost due to accidents than strikes**

Accident-related injuries are a drain on the economy and prevent people from working. Across the UK in 2022/23 7.7 million working days were lost by those who were unable to work after an accident as they’d been admitted to hospital, or by their carers who took time off work to be with them. A further 21 million working days were lost by those who had to attend A&E after an accident. Accidents cost UK businesses a minimum of £5.9 billion annually due to lost output and indirect management costs.

In total in 2022/23, accidents led to almost 29 million lost working days across the UK – 10 times more than were lost due to strikes (2.7 million lost working days) in the same year.

**Accidental deaths and serious injuries are increasing – with over half happening at home**

Businesses and the workplace have made huge strides in health and safety policy, with workplace fatalities falling by 79% since 1974, but this is being undermined by failings outside the workplace. Over half (55%) of all accidental deaths happened in the home and out of all those admitted to hospital after an accident (excluding road accidents) almost two thirds (62%) took place at home.

Businesses are losing their skilled workforce because of time off for accidents that happen outside of work – at home, on the road or in other public areas. And this problem is only getting worse, as accidental death rates in the UK have increased by 42% in the last decade and accidents now take over 20,000 lives each year. In England alone, accident-related hospital admissions for serious injuries have risen by 48% in the last two decades, forcing many more into long-term sick leave, or premature retirement and thereby choking economic growth.

**RoSPA is calling for the Government to create a National Accident Prevention Strategy to save lives, boost the economy and free up capacity in the NHS. Read RoSPA’s full report,** [**‘*Safer Lives, Stronger Nation’*.**](https://www.rospa.com/campaigns-and-fundraising/current-campaigns/national-accident-prevention-strategy/report)It must:

* Take a joined-up approach which cuts through departments and provides strategic leadership to guide policy making at national level
* Empower individual departments to craft and implement more detailed policies
* Propose ambitious and evidence-led policy interventions to reduce accident rates
* Cover core sectors affecting the UK economy: home, work, product, leisure and transport
* Address emerging challenges like the climate crisis, AI and the UK’s aging population
* Address inequalities like deprivation, age, ethnicity and region
* Take a four-nations approach to data sharing and collection
* Strengthen Government's data collection and publishing processes relating to accidents

**Becky Hickman, Chief Executive at RoSPA, said:** “Our research reveals that over half of all accidents take place at home, but on top of the pain and heartache for those involved, it’s also having dire consequences for businesses. We often see the physical effects of an accident, but not the true hidden cost. Businesses are having to cope with increased absences at a time when they are already facing significant skills shortages. Increasing numbers of preventable accidents are forcing people out of work, choking the UK economy and engulfing the NHS – taking up bed space, money, time and resources that could be directed to other serious illnesses.

“This does not make business sense, and it cannot continue. We are calling on the Government to implement a National Accident Prevention Strategy to sit across departments so problems can be tackled at their core, with a joined-up approach to cover all types of accidents wherever they happen. For too long we have accepted the economic and social consequences of accidents, and we’re still paying the price.”

**Dan Evans, Chief Executive at Speedy Hire, said:** “We take health and safety extremely seriously, and it is a source of immense pride that we have been recognised for our excellence in keeping colleagues and customers safe. For us, colleague safety doesn’t begin and end at the workplace door, which is why at Speedy Hire we take a ‘whole person, whole life’ approach. This has never been more important to do so, as RoSPA’s report reveals people are far more likely to suffer a serious accident at home than they are at work. Both the cost of accidents to peoples’ personal lives and to businesses is far too high, so we must act now to keep people safe and support economic growth.”

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**Notes to Editor(s)**

\*The full report, entitled: ‘Safer Lives, Stronger Nation: Our Call for a National Accident Prevention Strategy’ is available here: [www.rospa.com/campaigns-and-fundraising/current-campaigns/national-accident-prevention-strategy/report](https://www.rospa.com/campaigns-and-fundraising/current-campaigns/national-accident-prevention-strategy/report)

* A range of case studies and accompanying photographs are available by request
* Please contact the press team to arrange interviews with spokespeople
* Media pack can be found here: <https://www.rospa.com/campaigns-and-fundraising/current-campaigns/national-accident-prevention-strategy/media-pack>
* [RoSPA](http://www.rospa.com/) is a leading voice in health and safety that campaigns to reduce avoidable accidents. Our vision is to create a life free from accidental injury, and with the support of our members, this is at the core of everything we do. We lobby Government on issues that matter, pioneer the world’s largest health and safety awards and provide a suite of RoSPA qualifications that help learners and employers keep their colleagues safe from accidents and ill-health.