

If you're juggling multiple tight deadlines, feeling overwhelmed and unsure how to put it across to your manager without coming across as a "moaner," you're not alone. Workload stress is real, and crucially, **it's a health and safety hazard** — not a personality flaw. But in many smaller workplaces without HR teams or formal processes, raising stress can feel like walking a tightrope.

In this guide, I'll break <https://brightonjournal.co.uk/health-at-work-what-brighton-employees-should-know-about-their-rights-and-wellbeing/> down how to *raise workload stress* effectively and professionally, armed with facts about your employer's legal duties under UK law. I'll also provide practical language tips, a checklist for your **workload email to manager**, and context on how the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) stress management standards back you up. Plus, a reminder on how stress can relate to disability rights under the Equality Act.

## Why Stress Is a Health and Safety Issue, Not "Just Personal Resilience"

It's frustrating when stress is dismissed as someone lacking "personal resilience" or "not managing their time properly." The law sees it differently. Under the **Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974** and the **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**, employers must protect workers from risks to their health and safety — including *workplace-induced stress*.

The HSE defines work-related stress as "the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them at work". And they explicitly recognise it as a potential hazard that employers must assess and control. Stress isn't just "in your head"; it can cause serious physical and psychological harm.

## HSE Stress Risk Assessments and Employer Duties

The HSE provides a practical tool called **HSE Management Standards** — a benchmark tool that outlines six risk areas employers should monitor:

- Demands (workload, work patterns, environment)
- Control (how much say employees have over their work)
- Support (from managers and colleagues)
- Relationships (promoting positive working to avoid conflict)
- Role (clarity over roles and responsibilities)
- Change (how change is managed and communicated)

If your workload consistently spikes beyond manageable limits, that falls under '**Demands**'. Your employer should have a system to identify and reduce this risk — starting with listening when you flag up the problem.



## How to Raise Your Workload Stress Without Sounding Like You Are Moaning

The key is to be professional, fact-based, and solution-oriented. When you create your **workload email to manager** or speak up in person, avoid vague complaints. Instead:

1. **Make your concerns specific and actionable.** For example: "I'm regularly working 12-hour days to meet X and Y deadlines because the volume of projects has increased by 40%, and I do not currently have the capacity to manage this without impacting quality."
2. **Focus on impact and risk.** Frame stress as a health and safety risk, for example: "This sustained workload is affecting my ability to deliver error-free work and is causing significant anxiety and fatigue."
3. **Propose practical requests.** Such as prioritisation of projects/deadlines, additional support, or temporary reallocation of tasks.
4. **Refer to recognised standards where appropriate.** For example: "According to HSE Management Standards, excessive demands are a key stress risk to workers."

Here is a simple checklist you can use before sending that workload email or having that conversation:

Checklist for Raising Workload Stress Example / Notes **Specific Issue** "The volume of client proposals has increased by 50% in the past 6 weeks." **Health Impact** "I'm finding it hard to maintain focus and am experiencing higher anxiety." **Risk to Work** "This pressure risks errors and missing deadlines." **Request for Support** "Would it be possible to review project prioritisation or delegate some tasks?" **Reference to Policy or Law** "The HSE Management Standards recommend addressing excessive demands to protect wellbeing."

## Why Deadlines Prioritisation Matters

A core part of managing workload stress — for you and your manager — is clarifying which tasks are most urgent and important. This can be a win-win if you frame it right.

When workload feels like a flood, ask your manager to help prioritise based on business needs and realistic deadlines. This avoids you having to get all the information right yourself and encourages them to share responsibility.

Examples of phrasing:

- "Could we review the deadline priorities to make sure I'm focusing on the highest impact work?"
- "Which deliverables are business-critical this week, and which could potentially be deferred or shared?"

## Workload Stress and the Equality Act 2010: When It Becomes Disability

If stress causes a significant and long-term impact on your health — such as clinically diagnosed anxiety or depression — it might be classed as a disability under the **Equality Act 2010**. That means your employer has further legal duties to make reasonable adjustments to reduce your workload stress and prevent discrimination.

Reasonable adjustments might include:

- Flexible working hours
- Reduced or adjusted workload
- More frequent breaks or rest periods
- Temporary redeployment or modified duties

It's worth knowing your rights so you can approach the conversation informed, with evidence if you have it (e.g. from your GP or an occupational health report).

## Practical Tips for Communicating: Using the Right Platforms

Depending on your workplace culture and your relationship with your manager, you might choose different channels to raise workload stress. A well-structured **workload email to manager** is often best — it creates a clear record and gives your manager time to consider solutions.

If your team is connected on apps like WhatsApp, Telegram, Viber, or uses workplace social media like Facebook Workplace or Microsoft Teams, you can also use these for informal check-ins or reminders, but avoid raising serious ongoing concerns solely on chat apps where messages get lost.

If you want to share helpful resources or HSE guidance with your team or wider network, consider sharing links on social channels like:



- Facebook
- Instagram (Stories or posts)
- TikTok (short explainers)
- Twitter/X (thread on stress at work)
- YouTube (link to HSE videos)
- WhatsApp, Telegram, or Viber (team or peer group sharing)
- Pinterest (infographics and checklists)

Sharing evidence-based info can help normalise conversations about workload stress and encourage your employer to take action seriously.

## Summary: What to Remember When You Raise Workload Stress

- **Stress is not “moaning” — it’s a real health and safety concern.**
- **Your employer has legal duties under UK health and safety law** to manage work-related stress.
- **Prepare a clear, specific, and professional communication** outlining the issue, impact, and what you need.
- **Refer to HSE Management Standards** as a benchmark for employer responsibilities.
- **Ask to prioritise deadlines together** to manage workload and reduce risk.
- **Remember the Equality Act 2010** if your stress has a disabling impact — more formal protections apply.
- **Choose the right communication channels** and keep records of your requests and responses.

Raising workload stress doesn’t mean you’re complaining — it means you’re respecting your own health and rights. When you do it with professionalism and facts, you’re more likely to be heard and supported.

Found this useful? Share this post to help others navigate the tricky task of raising workload stress:

- WhatsApp
- Facebook
- Instagram (Share in Stories)
- TikTok (Create stress awareness video)
- Twitter/X
- YouTube (Share related HSE videos)
- Telegram
- Viber
- Pinterest