

The importance of musculoskeletal health

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Musculoskeletal health refers to bones, cartilage, ligaments, tendons and connective tissues. Together with the skeleton, they create a framework and support the body's weight, maintain posture and help people move.

Musculoskeletal conditions significantly limit mobility and dexterity, leading to early retirement from work, lower levels of well-being and reduced ability to participate in society.

Musculoskeletal conditions can affect people at any age. Prevention, early detection and treatment can support people to remain in good health, stay independent and continue to work. For staff who already have a musculoskeletal disorder, reasonable adjustments can help reduce the risk of worsening a disorder and ensure they can stay in work.

There were an estimated 68,000 work-related cases of musculoskeletal disorders (new or long-standing), which constitutes 22 per cent of all ill health in the human health and social work activities sector.

Across all industries, there are 7.3 million working days lost due to work-related musculoskeletal disorders in 2021/22.

Risks are not just associated with roles that involve patient handling, but are present for a broad range of roles where manual handling forms part of the role.