



European Agency
for Safety and Health
at Work



Health and social care

Protecting those who care for us

The health and social care sector is one of the largest in Europe. It plays a vital role in supporting citizens' health and wellbeing and is also an important contributor to the economy.

EU-OSHA's research project '[Health and social care sector and occupational safety and health \(OSH\)](#)' aims to provide evidence-based insights into the challenges faced by this sector and good prevention practices. The goal is to raise awareness and help shape better policies to improve the health and safety of workers.

OSH risks in the sector

Musculoskeletal risks are common, mainly due to lifting patients, repetitive tasks, and long periods of standing or sitting. These factors can lead to musculoskeletal disorders.

Psychosocial risks are also significant, including violence, harassment, traumatic events, heavy

workload, shift work, and bullying – all of which can harm mental health and wellbeing.

Workers may also face **physical risks** such as slips, trips and falls, noise, or extreme temperatures, and be exposed to **harmful chemical or biological substances**.

65% of health and social care workers are exposed to risk factors that could affect their physical health.

What research areas are covered?

Sector in figures: key OSH statistics and insights from recent surveys and publications.

Healthcare: sector-specific risks, preventive measures, and a focus on healthcare assistants' working conditions and OSH risks.

Long-term care: most prevalent risks in home and residential care, related prevention, and the need for practical tools, social dialogue, and worker involvement.

Musculoskeletal health: key risk factors, links to psychosocial wellbeing, and prevention tools and initiatives promoting good musculoskeletal health.

Mental health: psychosocial factors, their interaction with other health issues, prevention initiatives, and good practices for worker retention and reintegration.

Digitalisation: new OSH risks linked to automation, with a focus on emerging psychosocial challenges.



Find out more about EU-OSHA's research project at
<https://osha.europa.eu/en/themes/health-and-social-care-sector-osh>