



More than 1,400 suicides in construction in five years

17 March, 2017 By [Charlie Schouten](#)



There were more suicides in construction than in any other profession in the five years to the end of 2015, according to new data from the Office for National Statistics.

The figures, which cover people in England aged between 20 and 64, showed there were 1,419 suicides by those working in skilled construction and building trades from 2011 to 2015. Of these, 1,409 were men and 10 were women.

Number of suicides, 2011-2015

Source: ONS



1500

1000

This is more than three times the number of suicides by those working as corporate managers or directors and of those working in sales occupations, and more than 10 times those working in health and social care.

Of the 10,688 in-work suicides recorded by the ONS, those by skilled construction and building trades made up 13.2 per cent.

Mind Matters: Get involved

Take our [industry-wide survey, which closes today](#), to help shape the future of mental health awareness, and [sign up to our campaign by pledging to promote and talk](#) about mental health. Tell us how you will make a difference in your business in 2017.

Between 2011 and 2015, there were 1,047 suicides by those classified as working in construction and building trades; 351 by those working in building finishing trades, and 11 by those working as construction and building trades supervisors.

The data revealed that those working in construction were more 63 per cent more likely to die by suicide than the national average.

Trade union GMB described the figures as "a wake-up call for the whole country".

"Every suicide is a personal tragedy but these figures expose a national crisis that has been in the shadows for too long," said GMB national secretary for manufacturing Jude Brimble.

"There can be no excuse for high suicide rates in any sector, but unacceptable cultures of exploitation, poverty pay and insecurity still persist in parts of the manufacturing and construction industries.

"This is a national wake-up call for employers and ministers to take urgent steps to improve the lives of workers."

[Public Health England chief executive](#) Duncan Selbie said early action was crucial to stop employees "reaching a desperate stage".

"People who die from suicide are usually not in contact with health services, and often push through in silence as their ability to cope deteriorates," he said.

"The workplace offers an opportunity to reach people who need extra support.

"Simple actions can make a huge difference – talking with a manager or colleague can help people get the support they need, and ultimately save lives."

Health in Construction Leadership Group board member and Balfour Beatty health and safety director Heather Bryant earlier this year told CN that [an estimated 450 construction industry workers took their own lives](#) each year.

Industry leaders last month [demanded radical changes](#) in how the sector approaches mental health and warned the industry was not doing enough on the issue.