

Londoners did £7.3 billion worth of unpaid overtime work last year

Londoners performed £7.3 billion worth of unpaid overtime work in 2022, far more than any other [UK](#) region.

[Research](#) from the Trades Union Congress based on ONS data covering the third quarter of 2022 found that 16.7% of [London workers](#) did unpaid overtime work in 2022, more than any other region in the UK.

With these [employees](#) performing an average of 8.4 extra hours per week, also the highest in the UK, the average loss per [employee](#) was £10,796.

The cumulative £7.3 billion loss in London was more than the next two [regions](#) – the South East and the East of England – combined.

Among the jobs with the most unpaid overtime hours were vets, teachers and funeral directors, as well as senior company directors.

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“Nobody minds putting in longer hours for time to time,” [TUC](#) Regional Secretary Sam Gurney said. “But some workers in London put in thousands of pounds worth of unpaid overtime last year. Unpaid hours should never be a regular habit – that’s just exploitation.

“With staff shortages in many industries, work intensity and pressure to work longer days is a big problem.”

Gurney also said that working-hours-related protections are under threat from the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill, which seeks to repeal or reform a number of EU-derived laws including the Working Time Directive. The bill is currently under consideration in the House of Lords.

“The longstanding rights workers have to protect against working hour abuses are hanging by a thread,” he said. “Whether you voted for Brexit or not, none of us voted to have our workplace protections taken away.

“Ministers should scrap the bill going through parliament that is putting these rights at risk.”

Unpaid overtime was more common in the public sector, where 14.8% of employees reported working extra hours without [pay](#), compared to 11.7% in the private sector.

“Across the UK, public sector workers put in more than 8 million hours a week of unpaid overtime,” Gurney said. “They can’t keep going on gratitude alone. Staff in London are becoming burnt out and leaving their professions.

“The first step to fixing the recruitment crisis is to give our public sector staff the pay rises they have earned – and that they need to keep them out of foodbanks.”

The TUC released the [data](#) as part of “Work Your Proper Hours Day”. The TUC said that the date of this had historically been chosen based on when “the average worker doing unpaid overtime effectively stops working for free”.

This date, it said, is now early March rather than late February, but the TUC has chosen to keep celebrating the event in February because of the “widespread expectation” that this was when the event occurred.