

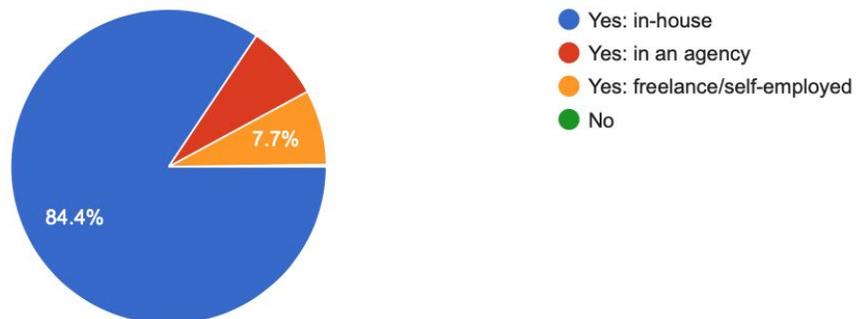


Comms and PR stress survey results

In September and October 2019, 442 communications and PR professionals responded to an online survey. Hel Reynolds, of Comms Creatives, set out a number of statements that would indicate a professional was experiencing stress at work. All answers were given freely and anonymously.

Do you work in a PR or communications role?

442 responses



Workload

1. 37% often or always have very long working hours
2. 60% often or always have too much work allotted to them
3. 61% often or always take on more work than they can handle
4. 28% often or always have the pace of their work is dictated by their manager
5. 36% often or always have a lack of control over the work assigned to them

Expectations

6. 63% are often or always have given work last-minute, and with unrealistic deadlines



7. 52% often or always have insufficient time to complete their work
8. 36% often or always have a lack of control over the work assigned to them
9. 30% often or always are given unrealistic targets to achieve

Rest and work/life balance

10. 48% often or always don't have enough rest breaks
11. 50% often or always have can't 'switch-off' when they get home from work
12. 50% often or always find themselves ranting to loved ones about work
13. 10% often or always find their work hours are inflexible and cause problems with childcare, domestic issues etc.

Confidence and professional development

14. 60% often or always experience imposter syndrome
15. 54% often or always feel their work isn't as creative as they'd like it to be
16. 55% often or always don't get time to read or take part in training because their workloads takes priority

Key quotes from anonymous responders

“The biggest stress for me is too much work, and it's made worse by the fact that I myself accepted it. I want to do it, because I can do it and do it well. But then I get overwhelmed by how much I have to do.”

“I'm given no time to plan, and never feel like I can work strategically. I used to love working in PR and comms but I'm ready to give up on my comms career.”

“Perfectionism drives my work-related stress - and lack of confidence. I never feel that I am doing enough ... and that others are better, and getting better results.”

“I find myself constantly managing social media evening and weekends which is a 'hidden' work.”



“A massive volume of work reliant on other parties, so therefore out of your direct control. It's what I think about when I'm trying to get to sleeping. It infiltrates my dreams. I wake up thinking about it.”

“My manager is a wonderful person but is also an anxious workaholic that constantly changes her mind! Working with her can be a lot of fun but at times I find it difficult to shield myself from her unhealthy behaviours. This really is a source of stress. There is not much separation between work and home. The flexibility of my work means I often work out of hours, so in some ways flexibility is counter productive for my well being!”

“The VP says he wants my advice then doesn't take it and does something he's always done, and gets the same feedback. Asks my opinion again, doesn't do what I advise and so on and so on.”

“I work for the NHS and the level of work expected of small comms team is unmanageable.”

“There's a lack of understanding about what comms is/does/can achieve - on one hand there's an assumption that all my team and I do is put up posters, on the other there's an assumption that we can develop strategy and drive forward policy and change with absolutely no actual ingredients or resource. And I'm really weary of having to explain again and again and again that comms is best involved from the beginning but that the actual plan eg to redevelop services or to ensure everyone undertakes mandatory training needs 🙌 an 🙌 actual 🙌 plan 🙌 in 🙌 the 🙌 first 🙌 place 🙌.”

“I'm producing the amount of content that a team of three usually does. In 2019, I typically work 8-6 and a full day each weekend. A lot of people in different functions end up working those hours when we have crises; for me, it's the norm.... I am the only communicator for 5000 employees. “

“The primary cause is the volume of work and little prioritisation from those that came above. There is also an issue on capability in wider team so it's always the ones that 'can' that end up 'doing' everything.”



“The organisation has not worked out a proper strategy and a result we can't prioritise or say no. We work through the tasks but that gives no pleasure or satisfaction.”

“My previous job caused me no end of stress because my line manager wasn't from a comms background and didn't understand how to employee engagement or Comms best practice. Her poor decisions and her constant micro managing was hugely frustrating. So I left. And my new job is awesome! Improved my quality of life.”

“Why are you doing this survey Helen? Why not stick to fleecing people on creative courses and “hilarious” cartoons? Feels like you're trying to jump on the bandwagon for a few £££. What's the output of this going to be, an amazing unicorn mug? “

**Note from Hel - no training sales or mugs as a result of this one! Lots of people ask me for help with huge workloads, and the reason for the survey was to get an idea of and share how much of a widespread problem stress is - but fair point, I can see my motives may look shady to anyone who finds my work annoying and doesn't want to work with me. If I can find a way to help make people feel less stressed, I will - while I run a business to earn a living 👍*