

Revealed: Which UK regions pulled the most sickies in 2017?

- Scotland had the highest number of employees (38%) ‘pulling a sickie’ in 2017, with the majority doing so to avoid a stressful situation at work
- North East had the lowest number of employees (15%) ‘throwing a sickie’, due to childcare issues
- Overall, out of all the employees who pretended to be sick, 18% confessed to being caught by their employer
- Collectively, the UK loses an astonishing 38 million days each year to employees feigning sickness – equivalent to the working days needed to build 2 Channel tunnels or 40 hospitals

‘Pulling a sickie’ is familiar territory for employees, but an inconvenience for employers. Whilst many employers may be unsuspecting of a worker’s absence, faking a sickness can negatively impact a business’s performance in several ways.

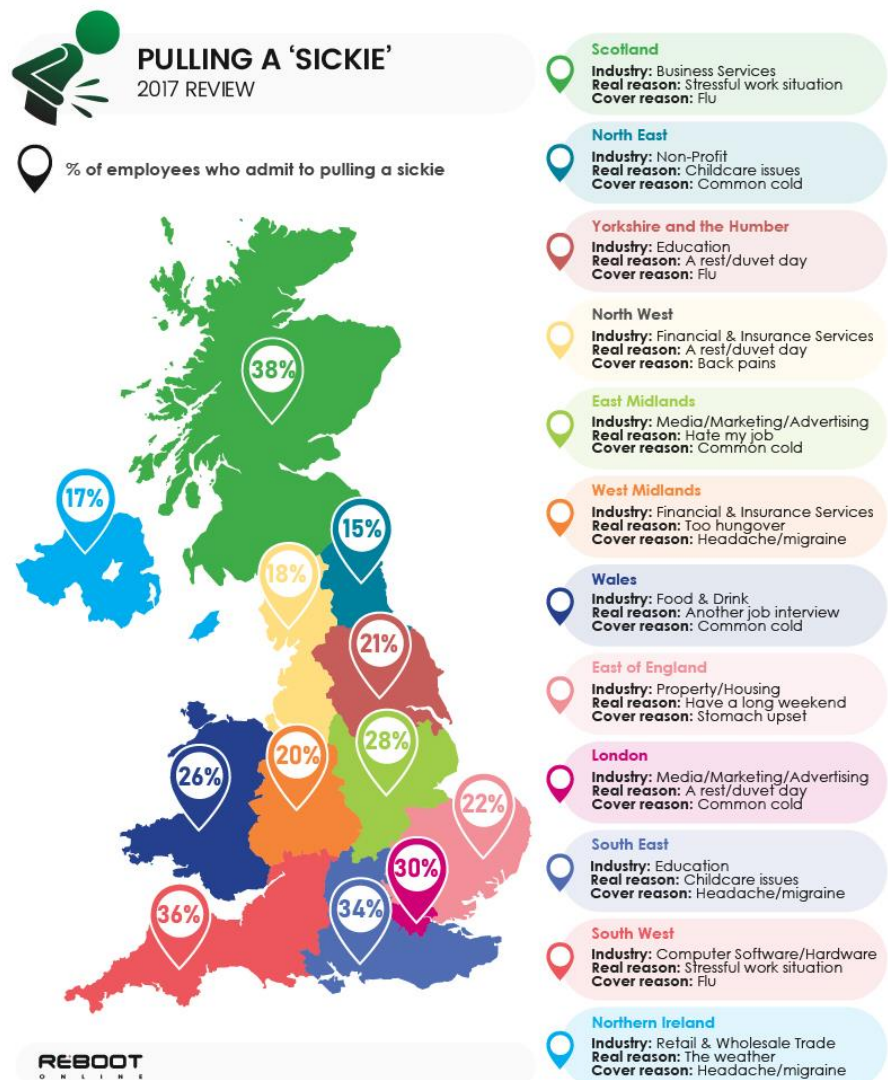
In fact, figures by BreatheHR shows that **£357** is the average cost to an employer for each worker who throws a sickie. The same research found they cost the UK an astronomical **£900 million a year**.

Interested in sickness rates, Adzuna.co.uk surveyed more than 3,500 employees to find out how many had ‘**pulled a sickie**’ in each UK region in 2017. Adzuna also sought to find out which industries had the most employees skiving off in 2017.

The findings revealed that employees in **Scotland** were the biggest offenders with **38%** shockingly admitting to doing so. **Business services** was the industry in which it was most prevalent. Interestingly, the real reason the majority pulled a sickie in Scotland was because they wanted to **avoid a stressful situation at work** (e.g. meeting, presentation etc).

Avoiding a stressful situation at work was also the number one reason amongst employees in the **South West – who had the second highest sickie rate at 36%**; with the computer software/hardware industry seeing the highest rates of sickies.

On the other end of the scale, the **North East** was the region which had the **lowest number of employees who faked a sickness,**



with employees in the non-profit industry the most common. Childcare issues were the most cited reason for faking a sick day.

Slightly above the North East was **Northern Ireland, where 17% of employees faked their illness, with the Retail and wholesale trade most dominant.** Surprisingly, the weather was the actual reoccurring motive behind those in Northern Ireland pulling a sickie.

Overall, **out of all those who admitted to faking being sick, 18% confessed to getting caught by their employer.** Out of the 18% who got caught - **36%** were given a verbal and/or written warning, **24%** an informal 'telling off', **22%** faced no action and **18% were fired from their job.**

Moreover, combing the data from the survey and that of [The Office of National Statistics \(ONS\)](#), Adzuna.co.uk produced an approximate estimate of how many days are lost to fabricated illnesses in each UK region.

UK Region	Number of Days Lost to Sickies (2016-17)
London	6,296,108
Scotland	5,396,679
South East	5,392,922
South West	4,261,893
East Midlands	2,833,639
North West	2,748,266
East of England	2,748,065
Yorkshire and the Humber	2,663,812
West Midlands	2,289,365
Wales	1,830,682
North East	863,071
Northern Ireland	707,190
TOTAL	38,031,692

Collectively, the **UK loses an astonishing 38 million days each year because of employees feigning sickness.** To put this into context, the man hours lost by sickies in the UK in just one year, equates to the same number of working days to build **two Channel tunnels, or 40 hospitals!**

Doug Monro, Co-Founder of [Adzuna](#) commented:

"Employees who 'bunk off', should consider the impact their absence could have on time sensitive projects or the subsequent increase in pressure on their colleagues. Those who have genuine reasons to avoid work, whether it's due to childcare issues, an internal dispute or something more personal, would be better advised to approach their employers to see if a reasonable solution can be agreed to."

Notes to editors

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