

The pressure of trying to collect tax when the governme...

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There was a shocking report [in Wales Online yesterday](#):

More than 17,000 days have been taken off work as a result of stress-related illness at tax offices across Wales over the past three years, shocking figures obtained by Plaid Cymru reveal.

In Carmarthen's Crown Buildings 42.64% of all absences in 2010-11 were stress-related, while in the same year it was 31.77% in Merthyr Tydfil, 31.71% in Porthmadog and 25.61% at Ty Nant, Swansea, according to information obtained by the party from HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC).

At Wales' biggest tax office in Llanishen, Cardiff, where 2,442 full-time equivalents work, a total of 12,599 working days were taken off over the past three financial years because of stress — varying between 15.81% and 20.07% of overall sickness rates.

I am not surprised, but am saddened by this data.

HMRC staff have been subject to enormous pressure by cuts. Posts have been cut and not replaced. The burdens on some have become intolerable.

As bad, HMRC staff have to work in a service where the leadership of their own organisation has an anti-tax culture, and they in turn report to a government that clearly does not believe that it should solve our current national financial crisis by collecting the tax due to it.

It's very easy to understand why people who want to undertake their work professionally find it difficult to do so when all that they think of value in what they do is undermined by the people they work for.

Disclosure: I do work with PCS, the union who represent many staff at HMRC, and am proud to do so.