

Sharp increase in the working wounded

A quarter of workers (24 per cent) who thought they were too ill to work at some point in January still turned in, research for the TUC has found. The YouGov poll found a big majority of these struggled in because they did not want to let down their work colleagues. The TUC says the poll paints a very different picture of sickness absence to the caricature that British workers are always taking bogus sickies and stay home at the first sign of a sniffle. The poll suggested more than half the workforce (57 per cent) had gone to work when too ill during the last year. Only one in eight (12 per cent) said they have never gone to work when too ill. The figures reveal an unhealthy trend. The TUC asked similar questions in a 2004 poll, when one in five (19 per cent) said that they had been to work in the preceding month when too ill to do so. One in four (25 per cent) – twice as many as in the latest poll - said they had never been to work when too ill. In the new poll, concerns about letting down colleagues or landing them with extra work topped the reasons workers trooped in sick. More than one in four (29 per cent) said that the recession will make them more likely to go to work when ill. TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: “Too often we are told that British workers are always taking bogus sickies or taking time off at the first sign of a sniffle. But the truth is that we are a nation of mucus-troopers who struggle into work even when we are too ill because we do not want to let colleagues, clients or our employer down.” He added: “While this is admirable, it is not always the best thing to do. Coughs and sneezes still spread diseases, and the worst thing you can do to your workmates is pass on your illness.”

- [TUC news release](#).