SUZY'S CHARTER FOR WORKPLACE SAFETY

Guidance for employers and employees to Stay Safe at Work

1. Embed a workplace personal safety culture

- Employers can do this by ensuring regular consultation and dialogue with staff about the risks they face and the steps they would like to see implemented. This should counter any perceptions or acceptance by employees of violence and aggression being 'part of the job'.

- Employees must follow all safety policies and procedures provided by employers which support them to feel and be safer.

2. Implement robust risk assessments

- Employers must carry out regular risk assessments to mitigate risks for all employees and ensure compliance with legislation and guidance for the protection of the personal safety of workers.

- Risk assessments[i] should include specific consideration of lone workers[ii] as well as risks related to all specific environments that different staff work in, such as private homes, out of hours work in usually-populated workplaces, and remote locations etc.

- Risk assessments should include consideration of all forms of violence, aggression, stalking and harassment, both online and offline. This should include behaviours motivated by prejudice on the basis of a worker's personal characteristics or perceived personal characteristics (e.g. race, gender, identity etc.).

- Risk assessments should include the impact of stress and mental health implications of violence and aggression connected to work.

- Risk assessments should be regularly reviewed by the department responsible for personal safety, with employees to reflect the changing reality of their work.

- Training should be implemented to ensure that all employees have understood the risk assessment once written.

- Dynamic risk assessments should also be carried out to take account of any temporary changes in the work environment or nature of the work.

3. Provide robust reporting procedures

- Employers should provide access to reporting tools for all employees, including remote workers and options to report anonymously, to enable immediate and reactive reporting of all personal safety incidents relating to, or impacting on, work.

- Reporting procedures should include incident follow-up with employees to ensure employee wellbeing and wider risk mitigation for the organisation, as well as sign-posting to support services where required.

- Employees and employers should be encouraged to report incidents to the police.

4. Provide personal safety training

- Employers should train[iii] all employees in preparing for and responding to personal safety risks i.e. violence and aggression related to work, as well as skills in conflict de-escalation, to support and embed policies and procedures, according to specific risk assessments.

5. Implement a tracing system

- A designated colleague, called a 'buddy', should always be informed about the whereabouts and contact details of a specific employee while they are lone working, including out of normal office hours.

- Employers should ensure employees share contact details of the person they are meeting with their buddy. This should include travel details, the exact location (e.g. coffee shop, flat/room number and block name etc) and time of appointment as well as name and contact details of the person they are meeting where relevant.

- Have a clear procedure to follow if a colleague does not return or check in when expected with clear lines of escalation inside and outside the organisation.

6. Have a system in place to covertly raise the alarm

- Enable employees to alert colleagues in case of an emergency while working alone e.g. use of a code word, panic alarm installed in the workplace etc.

- Where possible have discreet lone worker devices available or provide access to an alert system to covertly call for immediate help even in areas without phone signal.

7. Offer staff a personal safety alarm if necessary

- Depending on the outcome of risk assessments, employees should be offered a personal safety alarm which they carry to distract an aggressor where appropriate and aid escape from a personal safety incident.

8. Regularly consult on and review safety policies and procedures with employees

- Keep these updated, inform staff and provide access to, and training on, all personal safety measures available.

i   Employers should follow HSE guidance on risk assessments.

ii Lone working is defined by the HSE as 'those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision

iii www.suzylamplugh.org/Pages/Category/lone-worker-training