

Keeping Safe and Well

Helping you and your staff keep safe and healthy at work

Summit marks leap forward to health and well-being for all

Captains of industry and key stakeholders from across the public and private sectors signed a charter in May 2006 committing to deliver a healthier future for working-age people. A diverse audience, including government ministers, attended the first summit of its kind, marking a key step for the ground-breaking *Health, Work and Well-being Strategy*, which emphasises the importance of creating healthy working environments.

The strategy, launched by the Department for Work and Pensions, the Department of Health and the Health and Safety Executive, lays out a blueprint for change to create healthier working environments but also to ensure people get the help and understanding they need to stay in work if they get ill.

More than thirty-five million days are lost each year to occupational ill health and injury, costing the economy an estimated £12 bn

The summit was the first chance for stakeholders from all walks of life to get together and discuss how they make the vision a reality. Lord Hunt, Minister for Work and Pensions said: "The strategy is a crucial part of delivering on the Government's commitment to improving the health and well-being of the working age population, but the Government cannot achieve it alone.

"Just by being here today, everyone has shown they are committed to building a world which rehabilitates rather than rejects people when they experience illness or dis-

ability. "But everyone will also be asked to sign a charter, formally committing them to making it happen."

Health Minister Rosie Winterton, said: "We know that work can be good for your health and is essential to so many aspects of a person's life.

"Creating healthy working environments has huge implications for individuals, their families, employers and society as a whole.

"We need to work together to improve health, reduce the ill health caused by work and support those wanting to return to work. This summit is the first step in achieving this goal."

The strategy was further strengthened last week when the Prime Minister announced the appointment of a National Director for Health and Work, Dame Carol Black.

Dame Carol, one of the nation's top doctors and President of the Royal College of Physicians, will take the strategy forward.

Minister for Employment and Welfare Reform, Margaret Hodge was also at the summit along with the Chair of the Health and Safety Commission, Bill Callaghan.

Margaret Hodge challenged stakeholders to not just sign the charter, but to commit publicly to definitive ways in which they would make the strategy reality in their respective worlds.

"A number of exciting initiatives make the strategy a reality including Workplace Health Connect - a route to information on occupational health, safety and return to work issues."

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Alarms Needed To Combat Attacks

Attack alarms should be issued to delivery postal workers and telecoms engineers to help protect them from a rising tide of violence.

That was the message from the CWU's Annual Conference in Bournemouth, as delegates voted unanimously to put technology at the service of lone workers who are increasingly being targeted by "criminal element".



Teachers receive 'record payouts'

Teachers from one of the largest unions were awarded a total of over £7.6m in compensation last year in personal injury claims and employment tribunals. The NASUWT union said the total amount awarded was a record high and £850,000 more than in 2004, with a sharp rise in personal injury awards in particular. And it fears the "compensation culture" will put an end to school trips. But the Department for Education and Skills said the number of public liability claims was actually falling.

The NASUWT annual report, where the figures are published, also details some of the most severe cases of violence perpetrated by pupils on teachers. One teacher from Preston was awarded £129,600 after she was hit on the head by a brick thrown by a pupil at a neighbouring school, and a teacher from Manchester who was assaulted by a 12-year-old pupil was awarded £27,500.

BE SAFE NOT SORRY



Generally, walking is a safe and practical way of getting around. The chances of you or a member of your family becoming a victim of violent crime are low.

Violent crimes by strangers in public places are still rare and account for a very small part of recorded crime.

However, people tend to feel more vulnerable on foot, especially if they are walking after dark. There are many ways you can prepare yourself to recognise and avoid potential dangers.

Taking a few sensible precautions make sense and most people are probably already aware of these:

- ▶ Carry money and valuables safely
- ▶ Keep your cheque book and cheque cards separately.
- ▶ Don't carry a lot of cash.
- ▶ Carry a wallet in an inside pocket. Stop pickpockets by securing it with a safety pin.
- ▶ Carry the following items separately: number for cancelling credit cards, phonenumber, travelcard/small change, car and house keys.
- ▶ Ensure that the fastenings on your bag/briefcase are secure.

Dress appropriately. Wear shoes that are easy to walk or run in. Don't leave coats or jackets containing valuables unattended.

Walk safely

Decide when to carry an alarm in your hand and know how to use it. Check it to ensure the batteries are not flat.

Keep your mobile phone charged up at all times. Tell your colleagues/friends where you are going and when you are likely to return

Know where you are going: check the route in advance. Keep to well-lit roads and pavements, as far as possible: avoid alleys, subways and dangerous short cuts.

Avoid wearing a personal stereo - it will reduce awareness of your surroundings. Walk facing traffic on the street side of pavements.

Be on guard with strangers. Be cautious in conversation: Don't give away any personal information. Trust your instincts and avoid crowds or groups which may feel threatening. Be wary of stationary vehicles with engines running and people sitting in them.

When cycling ensure your bicycle is in good working order. Make sure that you and your bicycle are readily visible (night and day).

If problems arise. If someone grabs your bag or wallet, let it go. If you think someone is following you, check by crossing the street. If they do follow you, quickly move to the nearest place with people and call the police.

If a car stops and you are threatened, use an alarm and move quickly in the opposite direction.

If you are attacked

Do Not....Kick your attacker in the groin. He will probably react with rage rather than pain, if he is hurt. Punch or hit the places with less flesh - shins, elbows, nose

Immediately you sense dangerShout: "Stop. Stay Away!" Repeat as often as necessary. If you carry one, activate your personal safety alarm.

If grabbed....Shout "No, No, No!" as loud as you can.

If grabbed from behind...shout and scrape the edge of your shoe down his shin, raking his flesh from knee to ankle. Follow through by grinding your heel into his foot.

If you break free drop everything and run for help. Activate your alarm and continue shouting.

DO NOT shout passive, submissive things like, "Help Me" or "Save Me" This conveys weakness to your attacker and may intensify his attack. Instead, shout aggressive, commanding phrases such as "No!", "Back off!" or "Get Off Me!"

If you can use the mobile phone - take a picture, press the speed dial buttons so that someone close can hear your cries for help. Try not to panic too much

For personal attack alarms visit www.trulySAFE.co.uk

CUT BUDGETS - TRAIN THE TRAINERS

Training the Trainers is a cost effective way of cascading training throughout an organisation. In-house trainers can provide all the conflict management training their organisation needs whenever and wherever it is most convenient.

What's more, they ensure organisations have a good source of conflict management advice on hand at all times - someone who can bring their knowledge to staff meetings, respond quickly to new training needs and help with the induction of new employees.

Increasingly, it is not only professional trainers who deliver training within an organisation. Managers and supervisors in particular are often required to undertake training, either in 1-1 or group situations. So whether you are an experienced trainer or have been newly appointed to a training role, Train the Trainer courses will enable you to transfer your skills, knowledge and expertise to those who depend upon you.

In-house trainers already know the organisation they work for and the staff and the issues involved. WiSE helps them to combine this experience with the skills they need to become really excellent conflict management trainers.

No two organisations are the same. Even within workplaces different groups may have very different training needs. Therefore, it is important that Trainers know how to adapt what they learn to their organisation and to individual target groups. In addition, trainers need a variety of training techniques to help them to communicate effectively with different target groups.

By the end of a Train the Trainer Programme, participants should be able to:

- ▶ Identify the conflict management training needs of both individuals and groups
- ▶ Plan, deliver & evaluate courses to suit different training needs
- ▶ Deliver conflict management training courses and talks of varying length
- ▶ Reinforce existing good practice relating



Young HEALTHY Minds



WALTER BRENNAN - YHM Designer

A study earlier this year by Aberdeen University suggested that a Jamie Oliver type 'mastermind' was needed to address the issues of mental health in Britain's schools.

The good news is that child mental health issues are making headlines at last. The bad news is that the level of ignorance of mental health amongst teachers and many other professionals working with children is disturbingly high. Whether or not a child mental health czar is appointed, the truth is mental health prevention is a seriously neglected area.

Even more depressing is the fact that many education and even health professionals would struggle to define what is meant by mental well being.

One in four young people is estimated to suffer from poor mental health, with problems such as self harm and depres-

sion becoming an increasingly common feature of the teenage years and below. According to the Mental Health Foundation 15% of pre-school children will have mild mental health problems, whilst 7% will have severe mental health problems.

I was fortunate to address a conference of teachers recently on the issue of challenging behaviour in the class room and whilst the majority of them agreed that mental health issues influenced many of the problems, there was a complete lack of guidance and training in this area, leaving many frustrated and demoralised - a significant number who are newly qualified!

So what do we mean by the term, "Mental Well being"?

I would describe it as emotional resilience which allows us to survive pain, disappointment and sadness, including the capacity to perceive, comprehend our surroundings, to adapt to them and to change them if necessary - summarised in one word...being happy!

How do we achieve this status with young and often vulnerable children?

Hollister explored the fact that we use the word "trauma" to describe a serious blow or damage to one's physical or mental health. Yet we have no word to describe how children can grow and become stronger. Hollister proposed the term "stren" to describe how sometimes

children gain positively from potentially traumatic incidents.

Mental well being promotion must be incorporated into a general health curriculum. And teachers and allied professionals must be trained to deliver the material to children as young as three years old.

It is crucial that a programme incorporates content such as emotional literacy, problem solving skills, resilience development, understanding feelings, understanding the importance of sharing and building relationships, all delivered within an atmosphere of fun and laughter.

Walter Brennan is an Independent Training Consultant with 23 years of mental health experience behind him. He has written and spoken extensively on this subject.

Young Healthy Minds Train the Trainers

3 Day Course
Tues. 21st - Thurs 23rd Nov. 2006

The Chaucer Centre
Merton, LONDON

To register or for more information
call 0870 240 3139
visit www.wisetraining.co.uk
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Hundreds of staff at West Yorkshire's NHS hospitals and health centres were physically attacked at work during

last year, new figures show.

As many as one in 50 doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers in the area were assaulted by a patient or visitor.

The figures were revealed as the Government announced plans to hand out £1,000 fines to anyone who is threatening or abusive to health service staff.

NHS bosses will also be given new powers to physically throw people out, including patients who require treatment, if they are a threat to staff.

Statistics for the 2004 to 2005 financial

year show that 314 staff at Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust were assaulted - accounting for almost one in 50 workers.

A similar proportion at Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust were attacked - with 182 staff suffering at the hands of patients or visitors - and 102 were assaulted at Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

One in 20 at Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust in North Yorkshire were attacked - 97 staff members. 49 West Yorkshire Metropolitan Ambulance Service NHS Trust staff were attacked during the period.

Dozens of staff at healthcare centres and GP surgeries in the area were also subjected to assaults.

WiSE with Oliver Brennan Training specialise in duty of care training in personal safety verbal de-escalation and physical interventions .
For more information call 0870 240 3139 or email info@wisetraining.co.uk

VIOLENCE AT WORK NOT JUST A PUBLIC SECTOR PROBLEM

New (May 2006) research from AXA



Insurance has revealed that a shocking **8% of work-related injuries sustained by employees resulted from a physical assault by either a customer or colleague.**

Maybe even more surprising is the fact that the professional services industry, which includes lawyers, consultants and accountants, experienced the highest level of physical assault with as many as 15% of employees working in the sector being assaulted by a customer.

The study also revealed that employees who work for large companies (250 employees or more) are almost twice as likely to suffer an injury whilst working compared to those employed by small and medium-sized companies (10 to 250 employees).

Safe working arrangements for lone workers

Establishing safe working for lone workers is no different from organising the safety of other employees. Guidance notes from HSE says employers need to know the law and standards which apply to their work activities and then assess whether the requirements can be met by people working alone.

Lone workers face particular problems. They should not be at more risk than other employees. This may require extra risk-control measures. Employers should identify situations where people work alone and ask questions such as:

Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker? Is there a risk of violence? Are women especially at risk if they work alone? Are young workers especially at risk if they work alone? Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?

Employers should set the limits to what can and cannot be done while working alone

Check that lone workers have no medical conditions which make them unsuitable for working alone. Seek medical advice if necessary. Consider both routine work and foreseeable emergencies which may impose additional physical and mental burdens on the individual.

What training is required to ensure competency in safety matters? Training may be critical to avoid panic reactions in unusual situations. Lone workers need to be sufficiently experienced and to understand the risks and precautions fully.

Employers should set the limits to what can and cannot be done while working alone. They should ensure employees are competent to deal with circumstances which are new, unusual or beyond the scope of training, e.g. when to stop work and seek advice from a supervisor and how to handle aggression.

How will the person be supervised? Although lone workers cannot be subject to constant supervision, it is still an employer's duty to ensure their health and

safety at work. Supervision can help to ensure that employees understand the risks associated with their work and that the necessary safety precautions are carried out.

Supervisors can also provide guidance in situations of uncertainty. The extent of supervision required depends on the risks involved and the ability of the lone worker to identify and handle health and safety issues. Employees new to a job, undergoing training, doing a job which presents special risks, or dealing with new situations may need to be accompanied at first.

The level of supervision required is a management decision which should be based on the findings of risk assessment. The higher the risk, the greater the level of supervision required. It should not be left to individuals to decide whether they require assistance. Procedures will need to be put in place to monitor lone workers to see they remain safe.

What happens if a person becomes ill, has an accident, or there is an emergency? Lone workers should be capable of responding correctly to emergencies. Risk assessment should identify foreseeable events. Emergency procedures should be established and employees trained in them.

Information about emergency procedures and danger areas should be given to lone workers who visit your premises. Lone workers should have access to adequate first-aid facilities and mobile workers should carry a first-aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries. Occasionally risk assessment may indicate that lone workers need training in first aid.



THE 2 MINUTE RISK ASSESSMENT

You may experience a situation which needs a risk assessment 'on the hoof'.

Walter Brennan has developed a very simple method of assessing a potentially dangerous situation which should take no more than 2 minutes to undertake. Ask yourself this series of questions. Calculate the score - ideally keeping it in your head. The higher the score the higher the risk.



- 1: Do you know the person? Yes=5 No=10
- 2: If yes does the person have a known history of violence?
No=0 Yes = 10 Don't know =10
- 3: Has the person become verbally abusive or suddenly become quiet? Yes= 10 No = 0
- 4: Has the person said he/she intends to become violent towards you or colleague? Yes = 10 No = 0
- 5: Does the person have or appear to have a mental health problem? Yes =10 No=0
- 6: Is the person under or appear to be under the influence of alcohol/drugs? Yes = 10 No = 0
- 7: Is the person's body language hostile or aggressive?
Yes= 10 No = 0
- 8: Is the task being undertaken likely to cause the person to become angry/upset? Yes = 10 No = 0
- 9: Are there sufficient numbers of staff on duty and available to manage a violent situation should it arise?
Yes =5 No=10
- 10 Does your unit provide safety first for staff:
cctv = -1, personal alarm system = -2 Training in Aggression management = -5 Yes= 1-8 None = 10
- 11 Do staff feel comfortable about the situation?
Yes 5 No= 10

20 - 34 Low risk of violence
35 - 64 Medium risk
65+ High risk

Assessing the risk of the violence a person can face in a job is a legal requirement. The HSEs 5 Steps to Risk Assessment and The Hazard Rating Number Scheme are commonly used. (see www.wisetraining.co.uk/risk_assess)

Whichever system is used it is vital that the findings are acted on. Too many organisations undertake risk assessments and just file them away. In court, there is no defence in saying proper risk assessments were carried out.

Keeping Safe and Well is published by Wise Brennan. Wise Training with Oliver Brennan Training supply consultancy and training in conflict management and mental well being. Conflict management training includes a wide range of tailor made courses from personal safety and verbal de-escalation to physical interventions. Mental well-being is rapidly becoming an important topic for everybody. From pre-school 3 year olds to people in their 70s our training can be used to help minimise the effects mental and physical depression. For more information visit www.wisetraining.co.uk or call 0870 240 3139 or email info@wisetraining.co.uk. To hear or air your views on these subjects visit the Wise Training blog <http://wisetraining.blogspot.com/>