Supplementary written evidence from Dr Sandra Fielden (SHW0071)

Further to my previous written evidence, SHW0068, I would like to submit this additional written evidence.

As part of the government policy SH would ideally fall under the remit of the Health and Safety Executive, as it produces an environment that can significantly damage those experiencing SH.

These are some of the key areas that organisations should consider when developing a SH policy:

- SH policies should recognise the different experiences and impact of SGH on the members of diverse groups.
- Recognition that there can be an overlap with bullying.
- Inappropriate behaviour should be listed:
  - These should be specific
  - It should be possible to measure these objectively
- Victims, and witnesses, should be encouraged to speak.
- The actual punishments that will be awarded, should a member of staff enact inappropriate behaviour, should be clearly stated in the report:
  - These should apply to all member of the organisation regardless of status
  - Stakeholders, customers and anyone interacting with employees as part of their daily work should be culpable
- No actions should have a negative impact on the victim at any stage during the investigation.
- Ideally an independent would be used to deal with claims of SH, in order to avoid the influence of relationship and organisational politics:
  - If this cannot be achieved then the matter should be investigated by someone outside of the victims line management
- All employees should know who they are to report to should the experience or witness SH.
- Policies should make it very clear that victims will be supported throughout.
- Counselling should be offered to victims and witnesses, depending on the severity of the impact on their well-being.
- Should legal action be necessary, due to the severity of the behaviour, anytime of work should be paid as compassionate leave and a representative from the organisation should be available to accompany that individual should they require it.
- Perpetrators, if found guilty, should be monitored if their behaviour was not serious enough to result in dismissal:
  - Should it necessary to move one of the parties it should be the choice of the victim as to who moves
Training should be undertaken by professionals and should be a minimum of ½ day, preferable one whole day, and include role play to reinforce what inappropriate actually means in practice. It should encourage witnesses to speak up and emphasise that no behaviour is too small to report – perpetrators often begin small and progress when they are not challenged. Training should begin with top management and those who deal with accusations of SH. This latter group would need additional training in how to handle the victims and perpetrators, and possible support depending on what they have to deal with.

Organisations need to publicise their policies regarding SH and encourage staff to speak up. Organisations that do not train staff and take a strict approach to inappropriate behaviours could be seen as colluding with the perpetrators.

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