

Response ID ANON-8A3C-BE8S-1

Submitted to **Health is everyone's business: Proposals to reduce ill health-related job loss**

Submitted on 2019-08-13 15:29:11

Your details

What is your name?

Please enter your name here.:

Michael Bevington

What is your email address?

Please enter your email address here.:

michael@es-uk.info

Are you responding as:

A charity representative

If you answered other, please state your answer in this box.:

State

If applicable, what is the name of your organisation?

Please enter the name of your organisation here.:

ElectroSensitivity UK (ES-UK) www.es-uk.info

Are you happy for your response to be published?

Yes

If you would like your response to be treated as confidential, please explain why.:

Your details (charities)

Which region(s) do you work in?

North East, North West, Yorkshire & Humber, East Midlands, West Midlands, East of England, London, South East, South West, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland

What needs to change

1 Do you agree that, in addition to government support, there is a role for employers to support employees with health conditions, who are not already covered by disability legislation, to support them to stay in work?

Strongly agree

2 Why do you think employers might not provide support to employees with health conditions not already covered by disability legislation to help them stay in work?

Please enter your answer in this box.:

Firstly, some employers are not informed about the ways they can and should support employees with Electrosensitivity. Even basic requirements, such as providing a work place without Wifi or mobile phone radiation, are not always understood in practical terms. For instance, not using a mobile phone may still leave it emitting radiation which disables the person with an intolerance to this radiation, since many mobile phones download and upload data such as GPS tracking without the knowledge of their users. In these cases phones should be switched to airplane mode. Likewise, it is not enough to ask for people not to use a Wifi laptop, since the Wifi routers still emit signals in standby mode and smart phones use Wifi for data and updates.

Secondly, PHE mistakenly declares that there is no problem in everyone being exposed to Wifi and mobile phone radiation. This viewpoint is regarded by the majority of involved scientists as invalid and against the overwhelming scientific evidence going back to 1932; indeed, this radiation was classified as a 2B human carcinogen in 2011. Nevertheless some employers are misled into thinking that PHE is providing valid scientific advice when the majority of scientists disagree.

Thirdly, PHE uses ICNIRP's safety guidelines but these are short-term and for heating only. Employers need to use long-term and biological guidelines such as EUROPAEM 2016 and IGNIR 2018 for people intolerant of EM exposures. Even ICNIRP stated in 2002 that governments should provide non-thermal long-term guidelines for such people. The heating guidelines are 61 Volts per metre averaged over 6 or 30 minutes. The long-term guidelines are 0.6 V/m, and 0.006 V/m for some people intolerant of this type of radiation.

A clear legal framework for employers (page 1 of 5): Work(place) modifications

3 Do you agree that a new 'right to request work(place) modifications' on health grounds could be an effective way to help employees to receive adjustments to help them stay in work?

Yes

Please give reasons for your answer.:

Some 80% of the population is sensitive to electromagnetic radiation as from mobile phones and Wifi, most subconsciously but about 1.2% of the population is severely affected. Each of these 800,000 people in the UK is affected differently, depending on their individual genetic make-up, so it makes sense for them to be able to explain to their employer how best they can be helped. This would enable the employer to make the most effective adjustments for that individual. There is a wide variation in effects. Thus some people are particularly affected by mobile phones up to say 3 metres or more away. Other people may be affected by strong varying magnetic fields from power cables. Others are affected particularly by vehicle tracker devices, smart board links in meeting rooms, smart meters even in other properties, Wifi-enabled appliances or check-out machines using EM radiation. It would therefore be sensible for the employee to have the right to request specific modifications, since this would reduce the cost to the employer and maximise the effectiveness for the particular employee.

4 If the government were to implement this new right to request work(place) modifications, who should be eligible?

Any employee returning to work after any period of sickness absence, Any employee who is able to demonstrate a need for a work(place) modification on health grounds

Please enter your answer in this box.:

5 How long do you think an employer would need to consider and respond formally to a request for a work(place) modification?

0-4 weeks

6 Do you think it is reasonable to expect all employers:

Yes

If no - why?:

Yes

If no - why?:

7 Please identify what you would consider to be legitimate business reasons for an employer to refuse a new right to request for a work(place) modification made on health grounds:

Other – please state below

If you answered other, please state your answer in this box.:

All employers should make an attempt to meet a request for workplace modifications.

Please give reasons for your answer.:

Since electromagnetic radiation adversely impacts some 80% of the population, any reduction in this radiation made by the employer is likely to benefit the health of the majority of the workforce. Any reasonable modifications would therefore be likely to save the employer costs and avoid ill health in the rest of the workforce over the long term.

A clear legal framework for employers (page 2 of 5): Encouraging early and supportive action from employers during sickness absence

8 The government thinks there is a case for strengthened statutory guidance that prompts employers to demonstrate that they have taken early, sustained and proportionate action to support employees' return to work. Do you agree?

Yes

9 If no, please give reasons for your answer.

Please enter your reasons in the box below.:

10 If yes, would principle-based guidance provide employers with sufficient clarity on their obligations, or should guidance set out more specific actions for employers to take?

Principle-based guidance provides employers with sufficient clarity

If other, please state your answer below.:

11 The government seeks views from employers, legal professionals and others as to what may be the most effective ways in which an employer could demonstrate that they had taken – or sought to take - early, sustained and proportionate action to help an employee return

to work. For example, this could be a note of a conversation, or a formal write-up.

Please enter your answer in this box.:

12 As an employer, what support would you need to meet a legal requirement to provide early, sustained and proportionate support to help an employee stay in work or return to work from a long-term sickness absence?

If you answered other, please state your answer in this box.:

13 As an employee: in your experience, what actions has your employer taken to support your health at work. Please describe how these were effective or ineffective.

Please enter your answer in this box.:

Employers in the UK have taken a wide variety of actions to enable employees who are intolerant of EM exposures to continue in work and fulfilling their job. These include the following.

1. Removing sources of EM radiation, e.g. removing or disconnecting Wifi routers in the workplace and surrounding areas to ensure the safety of the employee.
2. Preventing the use of mobile phones in the workplace.
3. Requiring the employee not to see clients in an environment where there is Wifi or mobile phones.
4. Requiring the employee to work from home or another place, rather than in an area where they are unable to cope with the radiation.
5. Requiring the employee to record his/her experiences in each location and providing access to regular meetings with a representative of the employer to ensure that the employee feels confident about the work routine being healthy and favourable.
6. Shielding, where possible, the employee from the offending radiation device or not requiring the employee to work in its vicinity.
7. Not requiring the employee to use a mobile phone or any other radiation device.
8. The employer issues warning notices to visitors and attendees at meetings to ensure that such people do not use their mobile phone or laptop or notebook in wireless mode during a meeting where there is a person intolerant of the radiation.
9. The employer fits switches to switch off Wifi routers in areas where the employee is working and posts warning notices about the need for all people in that area to switch off their mobile phones.
10. The employer introduces other technology in place of wireless EM radiation, such as cabled internet access for computers, land-line telephones, wired microphones in place of wireless microphones, and infra-red hearing links in place of traditional EM wireless hearing loops.

14 As an employee: what further support/adjustments would you have liked to receive from your employer?

Please enter your answer in this box.:

Many people with an intolerance to an environmental toxic agent like electromagnetic radiation would like employers to give much more emphasis to information for all employees about necessary radiation hygiene and safety procedures. There is then less stigma involved for the person physically disabled by this radiation. Some employers have even been known to adopt PHE's invalid claim that all such radiation and EMFs are safe. These employers have therefore refused to make the simple modifications needed. This has led to employees then suffering the difficulty of being forced to resign or leave their employment and possible take their employer to an employment tribunal.

Some employers have ridiculed the physical problems faced by employees physically disabled by wireless radiation and have refused to consider seriously their needs, basing their approach on PHE's dismissal of any harm and the DHSC's refusal to admit the existence of the problem.

Some employers have forced their employees to resign because they are unwilling to make any adjustments and have then forced them to agree to a gagging order to silence them for the future.

Some employers have simply ignored the requests for simple adjustments from older employees and expected them to take early retirement instead.

Some employers have ignored their duty of care or their need to make adjustments and have told employees either to accept injuries from their harmful working environment or leave their job.

In all such cases where employers are unwilling to accept their employee's disability and needs, it would be helpful to have an external agency to which the employee could go for help. Many occupational health advisers and doctors are not yet fully informed on disability and equality issues to do with wireless exposures and they have been unable to help.

15 All respondents: in order for employers to provide effective return to work support, what action is needed by employees? Select all that apply.

To have discussions with employer to identify barriers preventing a return to work and to inform workplace support, To agree a plan with their employer to guide the return to work process

If you answered other, please state your answer in this box.:

A clear legal framework for employers (page 3 of 5): Reforming SSP (1)

16 All respondents: do you think the current SSP system works to prompt employers to support an employee's return to work?

Maybe

Please give reasons for your answer.:

By allowing three waiting days the present system usually helps in dealing with cases of minor illness.

17 All respondents: what support would make it easier to provide phased returns to work during a period of sickness absence?

Guidance on how to implement a good phased return to work

If you answered other, please state your answer in this box.:

18 All respondents: would the removal of rules requiring identification of specific qualifying days help simplify SSP eligibility?

Maybe

Please give reasons for your answer.:

19 Do you agree that SSP should be extended to include employees earning below the LEL?

Yes

Please give reasons for your answer.:

20 All respondents: for employees earning less than the LEL, would payment of SSP at 80% of earnings strike the right balance between support for employees and avoiding the risk of creating a disincentive to return to work?

Maybe

Please give reasons for your answer.:

21 Do you agree that rights to SSP should be accrued over time?

Yes

Please give reasons for your answer.:

A clear legal framework for employers (page 4 of 5): Reforming SSP (2)

22 Should the government take a more robust approach to fining employers who fail to meet their SSP obligations?

Maybe

Please give reasons for your answer.:

23 Do you think that the enforcement approach for SSP should mirror National Minimum Wage enforcement?

Maybe

Please give reasons for your answer.:

24 Do you support the SSP1 form being given to employees four weeks before the end of SSP to help inform them of their options?

Yes

Please give reasons for your answer.:

A clear legal framework for employers (page 5 of 5): Reforming SSP (3)

25 All respondents: how could a rebate of SSP be designed to help employers manage sickness absence effectively and support their employees to return to work?

Please enter your answer in this box.:

26 All respondents: at this stage, there are no plans to change the rate or length of SSP. The government is interested in views on the impact of the rate and length of SSP on employer and employee behaviour and decisions.

Please enter your answer in this box.:

Occupational health market reform (page 1 of 4): Addressing cost as a barrier to purchasing OH

27 In your view, would targeted subsidies or vouchers be effective in supporting SMEs and the self-employed to overcome the barriers they face in accessing OH?

Maybe

Please give reasons for your answer.:

28 Please provide any evidence that targeted subsidies or vouchers could be effective or ineffective in supporting SMEs and the self-employed to overcome the upfront cost of accessing OH services.

Please enter your answer in this box.:

29 In your view, would potentially giving the smallest SMEs or self-employed people the largest subsidy per employee be the fairest way of ensuring OH is affordable for all?

Don't Know

If no or don't know, what would be better?:

30 All respondents: what type of support should be prioritised by any potential, targeted OH subsidy for SMEs and/or self-employed people? (Please rank the below options in priority order with 1 being the highest priority).

30 - OH assessments and advice:

2

30 - Training, instruction or capacity building (e.g. for managers and leads):

1

30 - OH recommended treatments:

3

31 Please give reasons and details of any other categories of support you think should be included.

Please enter your answer in this box.:

For injuries from EM wireless radiation, it is first of all important that more accurate information is made available to OH. At present the advice from PHE and the WHO is out of date and inaccurate.

32 How could the government ensure that the OH services purchased using a subsidy are of sufficient quality?

Please enter your answer in this box.:

External validation by experts would be needed, not a reliance on current advice from PHE and DHSC.

Occupational health market reform (page 2 of 4): Improving capacity within the OH market

33 As an OH provider, would you be willing to submit information about the make-up of your workforce to a coordinating body?

Not Answered

34 If no, maybe or don't know, what are your reasons for not providing your data?

If you answered other, please state your answer in this box.:

35 As an OH provider, expert or interested party, what are your views on private OH providers' involvement in the training of the clinical workforce?

Private providers should be more involved but with additional support

36 If providers should be more involved but will need support, what additional support would be needed?

Please enter your answer in this box.:

There needs to be a radical overhaul of advice available from PHE and DHSC on the issue of workplace injuries from non-thermal non-ionising radiation. The work of EUROPAEM 2016 would be an obvious starting point for expert and approved international protocols.

37 As an OH provider, expert or interested party, what changes to the training and development of the OH workforce could support the delivery of quality and cost-effective services?

Please enter your answer in this box.:

As above, qu. 36.

38 As an OH provider, should there be a single body to coordinate the development of the OH workforce in the commercial market?

Not Answered

Please give reasons for your answer.:

39 If yes, what should its role be?

Please enter your answer in this box.:

Occupational health market reform (page 3 of 4): Increasing the pace of innovation

40 As an OH provider, what would encourage providers, particularly smaller providers, to invest in research and innovation in OH service delivery?

Please enter your answer in this box.:

41 What approaches do you think would be most effective in terms of increasing access to OH services for self-employed people and small employers through the market? (Please rank the below options in priority order with 1 being the highest priority).

Q41 - New ways of buying OH:

3

Q41 - New OH service models:

2

Q41 - The use of technology to support OH service provision:

1

Please give reasons for your answer.:

42 If applicable, what other approaches do you think would be effective?

Please give reasons for your answer.:

43 As an OH provider, expert or interested party, what more could be done to increase the pace of innovation in the market?

Q43 - Co-funding:

Q43 - Access to finance:

Q43 - Help with innovation or evaluation:

Q43 - Commercial advice:

Please state below any other measures that would be effective.:

44 As an OH provider, expert, interested party, what methods would you find most helpful for finding out about new evidence and approaches that could improve your service?

Please enter your answer in this box.:

Occupational health market reform (page 4 of 4): Improving standards

45 As an employer, what indicators of quality and compliance arrangements would help you choose an OH provider?

Q45 - Work outcomes:

Q45 - Quality marks:

Q45 - Process times:

Q45 - Customer reviews:

Please state below any other indicators of quality or compliance arrangements that would be helpful.:

46 As a provider, what indicators of quality could help improve the standard of services in the OH market?

Q46 - Work outcomes:

Q46 - Quality marks:

Q46 - Process times:

Q46 - Customer reviews:

Please state below any other indicators of quality that would be helpful.:

47 All respondents: how could work outcomes be measured in a robust way?

Please enter your answer in this box.:

For injuries from wireless radiation, it should be simple to see if the OH advice on employer adjustments enables to the employee to continue working.

48 All respondents: do you have suggestions for actions not proposed here which could improve capacity, quality and cost effectiveness in the OH market?

Please enter your answer in this box.:

Advice and support for employers (page 1 of 2)

49 Do you need more information, advice or guidance?

Not Answered

50 If so, what content is missing?

If you answered other, please state your answer in this box.:

51 What would you recommend as the best source of such new advice and information?

Not Answered

If you answered other, please state your answer in this box.:

Advice and support for employers (page 2 of 2)

52 As an employer, where do you go for buying advice and support when purchasing, or considering purchasing, OH services?

If you answered other, please state your answer in this box.:

Not Answered

53 As an employer, what additional information would you find useful when purchasing, or considering purchasing, OH services?

54 All respondents: do you agree with the proposal to introduce a requirement for employers to report sickness absence to government?

Maybe

Please give reasons for your answer.:

55 As a small or medium sized employer, would you find it helpful to receive prompts to information or advice when you have an employee on a sickness absence?

Not Answered

Please give reasons for your answer.:

Next Steps

56 Do you think this overall package of measures being explored in this consultation provides the right balance between supporting employees who are managing a health condition or disability, or on sickness absence, and setting appropriate expectations and support for employers?

Maybe

Please give reasons for your answer.:

As stated above, it is vital that advice on wireless radiation injuries from PHE and DHSC is radically changed to bring it up to date and into line with the majority scientific viewpoint and evidence.

At present some 0.65% of the UK population is estimated as not having full access to work or full-time education because of injuries and harm from wireless radiation, especially Wifi and mobile phones.

see:

<https://www.omegaonline.org/article-details/The-Prevalence-of-People-With-Restricted-Access-to-Work-in-Man-Made-Electromagnetic-Environments/2402>

If you would like to submit a file as part of your response to this consultation you can do so here:

Upload your file here:

The-Prevalence-of-People-With-Restricted -Access-to-Work-2019.pdf was uploaded