

## Assessing and tackling external violence at work

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EuskoTren is a company which manages various rail, tram, road and funicular transport services in the Basque Autonomous Region, as well as the Basque Railway Museum in Azpeitia.

Employees from EuskoTren are in constant contact with passengers and frequently exposed to external violence (verbal abuse, insults, threats or intimidation). The company decided to properly assess the psychosocial risks faced by its staff and put in place an external violence prevention policy.

The project to identify and subsequently assess the psychosocial risks faced by staff was carried out with the collaboration of a technical advisor. To obtain the required information, the following actions were taken:

- A coordination team was set up to carry out the project and to encourage staff participation.
- Individual interviews were held with people in positions of responsibility to gain information about the staff in their area.
- Focus groups were held among staff (with voluntary attendance) to find out more about the problem.
- An epidemiological analysis was conducted of absenteeism due to illness in recent years.
- A questionnaire was given to staff, with 165 questions on topics such as Stress, Psychological Health, Job Satisfaction, Vulnerability and Social Support.
- An analysis was carried out of corrective and preventive actions that might reduce the presence of risk factors and minimise their negative health effects.

Once the scope of the problem had been established, an Action Plan was put in place to counter external violence at work. The following actions were planned:

- Promotion of staff involvement in prevention activities through the setting up of two teams: the Multidisciplinary Improvement Team to coordinate the external violence action plan and the Zero Violence Team.
- Through these teams, EuskoTren tries to find solutions to the problems that are detected in all the company services: bus, train, tramway, funicular transport and customer service. The following are examples of solutions: installation of video surveillance in the bus service, coordination with the police in sensitive areas, training staff in how to react to these situations, etc.
- Preparation and implementation of an incident log and a guide to the prevention of external violence at work.

The main results have been:

- Better knowledge of risk factors affecting each job category.
- Staff involvement in prevention activities.
- Reduction in the number of incidents recorded.
- Improved working environment.
- Collection of data on incidents of external violence.
- Improvement in communication and staff information and training.