HOW TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT IN MICRO AND SMALL ENTERPRISES

Introduction

Violence and harassment in the workplace are occupational safety and health (OSH) risks that pose real challenges for both workers and organisations. They can undermine workers' dignity, health and work ability, while also affecting service quality, worker retention and organisational continuity. They encompass a wide range of behaviours, including physical assault and threats, verbal abuse, humiliation, exclusion, intimidation, sexual harassment, discrimination-related harassment and hostile conduct through digital channels. These behaviours may occur between colleagues or involve supervisors or managers, or they may be directed at workers by customers, clients, patients, service users or members of the public.

Despite growing awareness of psychosocial risks, prevention remains uneven. Findings from ESENER 2024 show that 39 % of workplaces in the European Union report having an action plan to prevent work-related stress, 55 % have procedures to deal with possible bullying or harassment and 59 % identify reluctance to talk openly about psychosocial risks as a key difficulty. However, these figures mask significant disparities by organisation size. Overall, 48 % of small organisations have no procedures in place to deal with bullying and harassment, compared to 23 % of large organisations. Furthermore, 34 % of small organisations report having insufficient information on how to include psychosocial risks in their risk assessments, compared with 21 % of large organisations.

For micro and small enterprises (MSEs), the issue is therefore particularly important. Small teams often operate with limited capacity, informal management arrangements and limited access to specialist human resource (HR) or OSH support. As a result, even a single incident can quickly escalate and trigger longer-term disruptions affecting workforce planning, morale, customer service and continuity of operations. At the same time, the proximity of working relationships in small organisations means that prevention and early intervention can be especially effective when embedded in everyday management practice.

Violence and harassment, like all occupational risks, are preventable and manageable. The potential for violence or harassment is shaped by multiple dimensions of the working environment, including job design, team functioning, organisational culture and structure, and exposure to third parties.

Against this background, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) has developed a practical guide for MSEs on preventing and responding to violence and harassment in the workplace.[1] It provides a structured, evidence-based approach tailored to the operational realities of MSEs, with the aim of facilitating feasible, proportionate and sustainable action.

Methodology

The guide is based on a targeted scoping review of academic and high-quality grey literature on preventing and responding to violence and harassment in the workplace, with a specific focus on workplace interventions relevant to MSEs. Its purpose was not to provide an exhaustive review of the literature on the topic, but to identify, assess and synthesise evidence on measures, practices and organisational approaches that could be translated into actionable guidance for MSE business owners and managers.

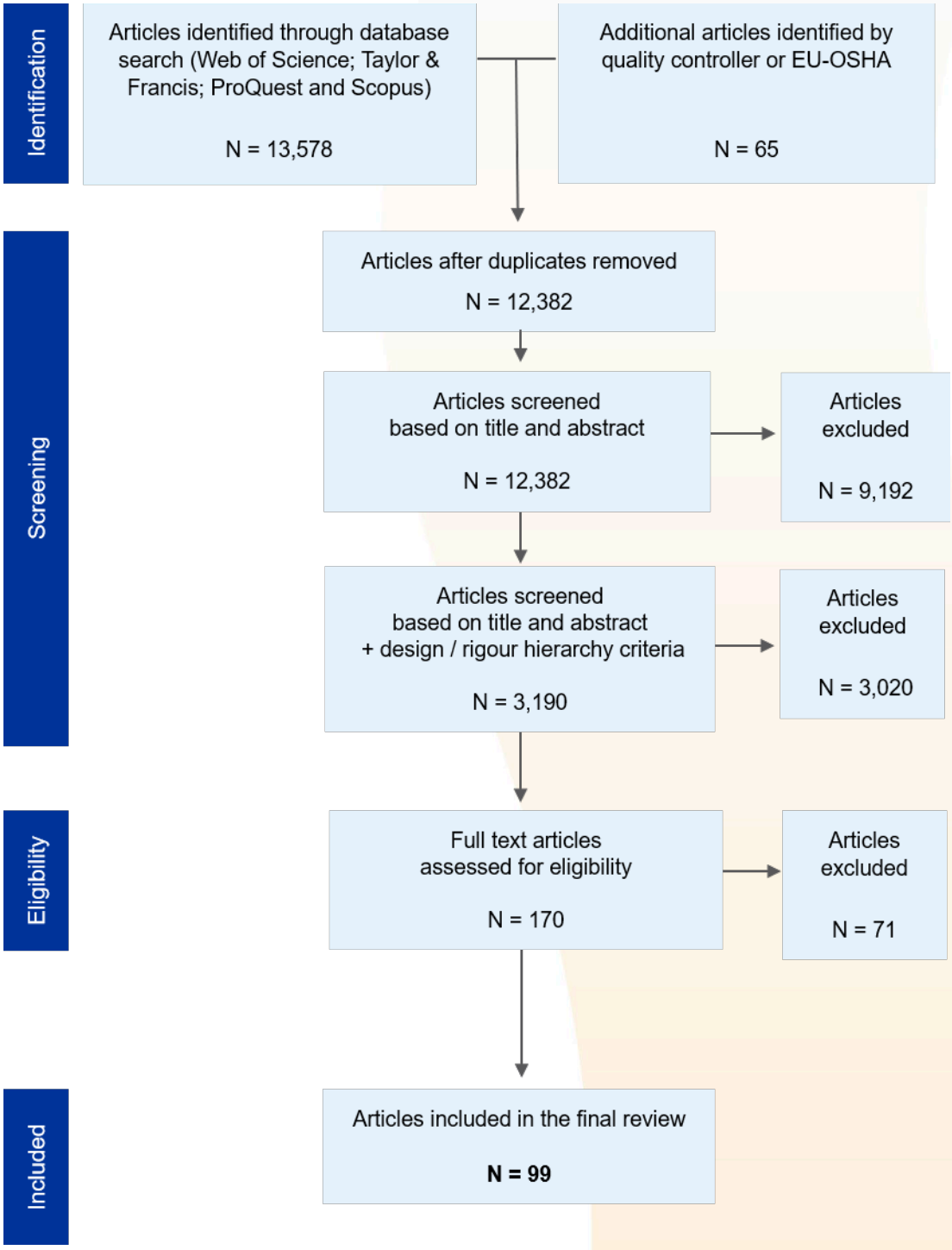
The methodological approach comprised five stages: conceptual framing and review design, source identification, screening and eligibility assessment, quality appraisal and data extraction, and synthesis into actionable insights.

[1] See *"Six steps to prevent and address violence and harassment at work in small businesses"*, at https://osha.europa.eu/en/user/login?destination=/en/publications/six-steps-prevent-and-address-violence-and-harassment-work-small-businesses

At the conceptual framing and review design stage, the selection criteria and main analytical dimensions were defined to ensure conceptual clarity, consistency and alignment with the practical purpose of the guide. These dimensions included the various forms of violence and harassment in the workplace, risk and contextual factors, preventive and response measures, health and work-related outcomes and organisation size. The review prioritised evidence published between 2015 and 2025, while retaining earlier sources only where they were clearly seminal or foundational. It focused on workplace-level interventions and implementation practices rather than legal or regulatory analysis, and gave preference to European evidence while also including international studies and reports where the findings were considered transferable to the EU context.

Source identification combined academic and grey literature. Academic searches were conducted in Web of Science, ProQuest, Taylor & Francis Online and Scopus, using search strings organised around three semantic fields: work context, violence and harassment, and prevention and management. This yielded 13,578 academic records, plus 65 additional records identified by the quality controller, EU-OSHA or with the assistance of ChatGPT 5.1; after duplicate removal, 12,382 remained for screening. The grey literature search combined snowballing, structured repository searches and broader web-based searches, covering sources such as EU-OSHA, the Joint Research Centre, Eurofound, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the International Labour Organization, and identified 172 sources. All materials identified with AI assistance were manually checked for credibility, authorship and relevance.

Figure 1: PRISMA chart of the scoping review of academic and high-quality grey literature



Source: authors´ elaboration.

Screening and eligibility assessment used clear inclusion and exclusion criteria. Included sources had to address workplace interventions or organisational measures and provide some evidence on outcomes, effectiveness or implementation. For the academic literature, title and abstract screening – carried out with the assistance of ChatGPT-5.1 (thinking mode) in batches of 1,000 records – reduced the dataset from 12,382 to 3,190 records, with sources published before 2015 removed manually unless clearly seminal. A human reviewer first screened a pilot set of 50 records, and these decisions were compared with the AI's outputs and used to refine the prompts until full agreement was reached. A second screening stage then filtered the 3,190 retained records for topical relevance and

methodological quality, using a four-level study design classification applied with the assistance of ChatGPT. Level 1 covered strong designs such as randomised controlled trials and controlled before-after studies; Level 2 covered moderate quasi-experimental designs; Level 3 covered acceptable but weaker designs such as simple pre-post studies with quantitative outcome data; and Level 4 covered purely descriptive or non-evaluative material, including case reports, policy commentaries and success stories without systematic data. Only studies at Levels 1, 2 or 3 were retained. Access availability at KU Leuven and EU-OSHA was verified, resulting in 170 articles proceeding to full-text review by human reviewers. Of these articles, 71 were excluded as they focused primarily on legislation without a link to workplace-level implementation, or were descriptive without empirical support. The remaining 99 articles were retained. For the grey literature, 35 sources proceeded to full-text review and 23 were ultimately retained.

For all retained sources, quality appraisal and data extraction were conducted using a structured review matrix covering bibliographic details, methodology, types of interventions, sector and country context, organisation size and main themes.

The synthesis into actionable insights identified recurring intervention types, evidence on effectiveness and implementation, enabling conditions, challenges specific to MSEs and key evidence gaps. This formed the basis for the approach presented in the guide, with a particular focus on measures that are feasible, proportionate and adaptable to the realities of MSEs.

Understanding violence and harassment in the workplace

What is violence and harassment in the workplace?

Violence and harassment in the workplace cover a wide range of behaviours that extend beyond physical aggression. These behaviours can include verbal abuse, threats, humiliation, intimidation, exclusion, hostile online conduct, work-related undermining, sexual harassment and discrimination-related harassment. Violence and harassment may occur within the organisation or involve third parties such as customers, clients, patients or other members of the public, making violence and harassment a multidimensional workplace issue.

Violence and harassment rarely begin with a serious incident. Such behaviour typically develops through a gradual escalation process, starting with less serious behaviour that, when left unaddressed, intensifies over time. Everyday acts of incivility, a dismissive remark, an interruption, a sarcastic comment or quiet exclusion may seem minor in isolation, but when repeated and ignored, they set a pattern. Workers may respond to rudeness with rudeness, creating cycles of retaliation in which behaviour becomes progressively more hostile. At the same time, unchecked incivility signals to others that disrespect is acceptable, which can embed it into workplace culture and actively normalise more severe forms of harassment over time.

Such escalation can follow various paths. Accumulated stress and frustration can contribute to behaviour such as verbal aggression, micromanagement, blaming colleagues or withdrawal, in ways that trigger hostile reactions from others. Unresolved conflict, particularly where there is a power imbalance between the parties involved, can develop into a sustained pattern of exclusion, humiliation or control. In some workplaces, harmful behaviour can become so normalised that harassment no longer needs a specific trigger. It simply reflects how things are done. The earlier these signs are recognised and addressed, the easier it is to prevent them from developing into more serious forms of violence or harassment.

Main drivers and occupational exposures

Violence and harassment are shaped by how work is organised, managed and carried out. Rather than individual characteristics, work-related and organisational conditions play a central role in shaping the risk of harmful conduct. Research consistently shows that the strongest influences lie in the work context itself, across four main dimensions: the job, the team, the organisation, and external contacts.

At the **job level**, risk rises when workload and time pressure are high, roles are unclear or the workforce is stretched. Job insecurity can also increase vulnerability: workers who fear losing their job or being denied opportunities may feel less able to speak up, set limits or refuse unreasonable behaviour, creating power imbalances that others may exploit. The physical work set-up matters too. Lone working,

poor lighting, blind spots or a limited ability to call for help can all heighten exposure, particularly in public-facing roles.

At the **team level**, inadequate, unfair or inconsistent supervision can contribute to the normalisation of disrespectful behaviour and erode trust. Effective day-to-day management, fair organisation of shifts and responsibilities, clear communication, regular contact and timely responses to concerns play an important protective role. Poor conflict management increases the likelihood that ordinary disagreements harden into harassment, particularly where workers do not feel supported by colleagues or managers.

At the **organisational level**, culture and leadership set the tone for what is accepted. In MSEs, this dynamic can be especially pronounced: if rude comments, exclusion or harmful banter are brushed off, these behaviours can become normalised and gradually develop into more serious and systematic harassment. Inadequate or poorly implemented policies, unclear reporting routes and inconsistent responses can further increase this risk.

In public-facing sectors, the risk of third-party violence or harassment is influenced not only by the behaviour of third parties but also by service design, workforce planning, communication and complaint-handling practices. While some risks arise from situations that cannot be fully controlled, many incidents grow from frustrations that employers can influence, through clearer communication, better complaint handling, adequate workforce planning at peak times and safer physical working arrangements.

Consequences for workers and for the organisation

Violence and harassment can have serious consequences for workers and organisations alike. In MSEs, the effects can be felt more quickly and widely than in larger organisations: there may be limited capacity to provide cover and no additional layer of management to absorb the disruption. What begins as harm to one individual can rapidly spread into wider team tensions, reputational damage and financial strain.

For workers, the consequences can range from stress, anxiety, sleep problems and reduced confidence to emotional exhaustion, depression and, in the most severe cases, trauma-related symptoms or suicidal thoughts. Affected workers may find it increasingly difficult to concentrate, make decisions or recover after work. Work behaviour can be affected too, through withdrawal, avoidance, increased sickness absence or leaving the job altogether, particularly when the affected worker feels unsupported or feels that the behaviour is not being addressed. The impact can also extend to bystanders, who may also feel unsafe and experience physical or psychological strain, potentially eroding trust and the overall psychosocial climate of the workplace.

For organisations, the consequences can include reduced motivation and commitment, more mistakes, lower service quality and weakened teamwork. Managing the aftermath of an incident absorbs time and resources that small teams cannot easily spare, with employers and managers drawn into firefighting rather than running the organisation. Reputational damage may also occur, particularly in close-knit local networks where trust is built through personal contact and word of mouth. There may also be legal or insurance implications. Worker turnover compounds these effects further: those who leave first tend to be the most capable and experienced workers, whose loss increases pressure on those who remain and can set off a cycle that becomes increasingly difficult to reverse.

Prevention and management in MSEs

The prevention and management of violence and harassment in MSEs is shaped by both constraints and advantages.

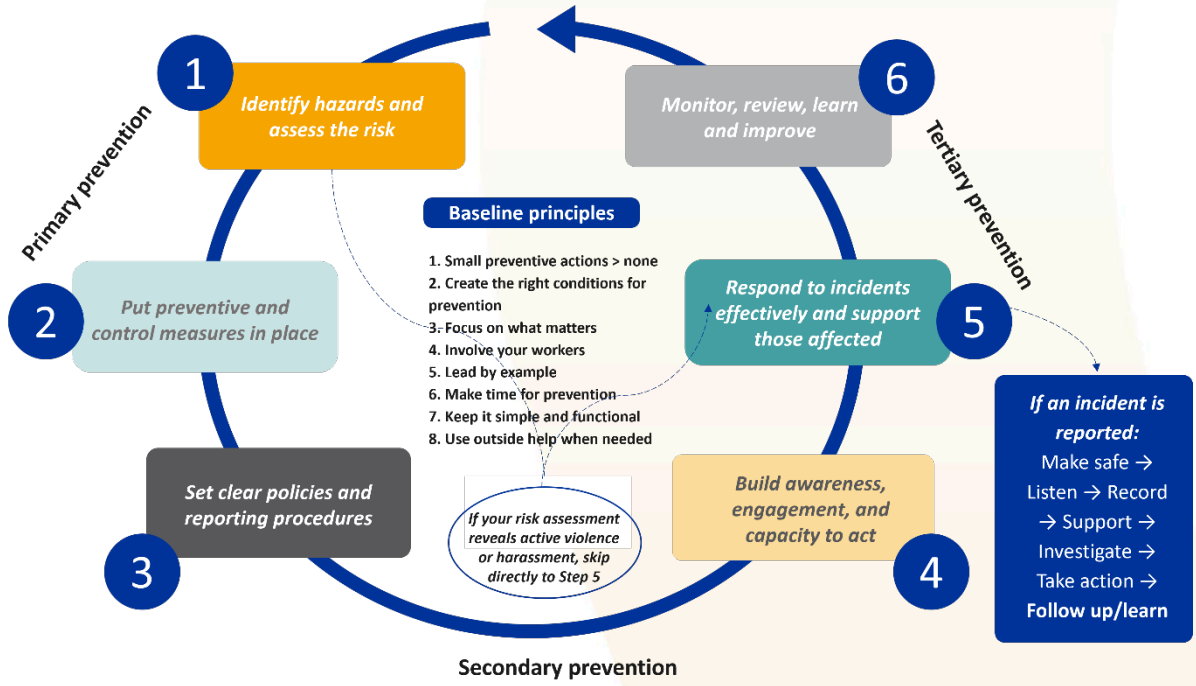
Constraints include limited time and resources, informal working arrangements, limited access to specialist HR or OSH support and the difficulty of speaking up in small teams where maintaining anonymity may be difficult. These factors can make prevention and response more challenging, especially when business owners or managers have to deal with sensitive issues without formal support.

At the same time, there can be practical advantages in MSE settings, including shorter decision lines, closer working relationships and greater visibility of daily interactions. Even modest changes in routines, supervision or communication can contribute to improvements in the working environment. Rather than

relying on complicated formal systems, prevention can be based on proportionate and sustainable measures embedded in everyday management.

A six-step approach for MSEs

Figure 2: A six-step approach to preventing and responding to workplace violence and harassment in MSEs



Source: authors' own work.

The infographic illustrates the approach set out in the guide, organised around the three pillars of prevention:

- **Primary prevention** focuses on preventing harm before it occurs by identifying and reducing OSH risks. In the guide, this is reflected in ***Steps 1 and 2***, which address risk assessment and the implementation of preventive and control measures.
- **Secondary prevention** focuses on early intervention once warning signs or incidents emerge, with the aim of limiting escalation and strengthening response capacity. In the guide, ***Steps 3 and 4*** address this through workplace policies, reporting arrangements, communication and worker awareness.
- **Tertiary prevention** focuses on responding after an incident has occurred, mitigating its consequences, supporting recovery and preventing recurrence. In the guide, ***Steps 5 and 6*** cover incident response, support, monitoring and review.

Importantly, ***Step 6*** feeds back into ***Step 1***, as lessons learned from incidents should inform renewed risk assessment and prevention efforts. The framework therefore presents violence and harassment prevention as a continuous and iterative process.

In addition to the six steps, eight guiding principles should be kept in mind throughout. A key point is that small preventive actions are better than none. Organisations do not need to address everything at once: choosing feasible, relevant measures and sustaining them over time can gradually help create a safer workplace. Before acting, it helps to assess the broader picture, as understanding which aspects of the workplace culture support change and where improvements may be needed can create better conditions for interventions to take hold. Efforts should then be focused on what matters, directed at the risks that are genuinely relevant to the organisation rather than every conceivable hazard. Workers should be involved at every stage, as their participation can strengthen commitment and shared

responsibility. Leading by example is equally important: the day-to-day behaviour of business owners and managers helps sets the standard for the whole team, and inconsistency between stated expectations and visible conduct can quickly undermine any policy. Prevention also requires regular, modest attention. A brief check-in repeated over time does more than an occasional comprehensive review. Arrangements should be kept simple and functional: clear expectations, an accessible way to raise concerns and a fair response process matter more than elaborate documentation. Finally, employers should not hesitate to seek outside support when cases are serious or sensitive, as a sector body, OSH service, mediator or adviser can provide neutrality and expertise that small teams cannot always offer internally.

The pages that follow provide a brief overview of each step, outlining its purpose and the key actions it involves. The academic and grey literature drawn upon in the development of each step is indicated, providing an overview of the evidence base underpinning the guidance. For more detailed explanations, worked examples and ready-to-use tools for each step, please consult the full guide, which has been developed with the specific circumstances and constraints of MSEs in mind.

> ***References used:*** *Leake et al., 2025; Nielsen et al., 2024; Rodriguez-Munoz et al., 2025; Wirth et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2023*

Step 1 concerns hazard identification and risk assessment. Employers are advised to identify relevant hazards across tasks, places, times, interactions and digital channels, and then to assess likelihood and potential impact in order to prioritise action. Worker input is essential, both because workers have first-hand knowledge of unsafe situations and because their participation can improve the quality and legitimacy of the process. The guide recommends proportionate prioritisation, starting with a limited number of significant risks rather than attempting to address every possible risk at once. EU-OSHA's OiRA tool is signposted as a practical resource to support this process. Finally, the risk assessment should be treated as a living document: following any incident, the risk assessment should be updated and fed back into the Step 6 review cycle.

> ***References used:*** *EU-OSHA, 2010; PRIMA-EF, 2008; WorkSafe Victoria website*

Step 2 addresses preventive and control measures. The guide organises these around the 'hierarchy of controls', which ranks measures from most to least effective: elimination and substitution (removing or replacing the source of risk) should be prioritised where feasible, followed by engineering controls (modifying the physical environment) and administrative controls (changing working practices), with personal controls used only as a last resort and always in combination with higher-level measures. In practice, multiple measures should be applied together wherever possible. Concrete starting points include workload planning, role clarity, workforce planning adjustments, adequate supervision and early conflict management, as well as improvements to the physical working environment, such as visibility, lighting, barriers, exits and alarm systems. The guide also addresses third-party risks specifically, recommending service design adjustments, clearer communication, effective complaint handling, buddy systems and safe exit arrangements to reduce the likelihood that customer or client frustration escalates into violence or harassment.

> ***References used****: Abeyta & Welsh, 2022; Kang & Jeong, 2019; Leake et al., 2025; Tuckey et al., 2022; Wirth et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2019; Zhang, Zou & Zhang, 2025; Zhelyazkova et al., 2025*

Step 3 focuses on policies and procedures. It guides the reader through setting out a short and workable code of conduct or policy that defines unacceptable conduct, clarifies roles, explains reporting routes, explains how confidentiality will be protected as far as possible, states anti-retaliation principles and sets out proportionate response procedures. The policy should apply to internal and, where relevant, third-party conduct. Importantly, a zero-tolerance stance must be implemented through fair investigation and proportionate action rather than automatic escalation. The guide also recommends designating a worker confidant, a trusted person workers can approach for confidential advice outside the formal management line, and building an informal resolution option alongside formal procedures, which is presented as particularly suited to MSEs, given its flexibility and lower administrative burden. Informal resolution may be appropriate for early-stage tensions or isolated incidents, but not for serious or repeated violence or harassment.

> ***References used:*** *Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, 2025; EU-OSHA, 2023; ILO, 2020; ILO, 2024; Ooijens, 2020; Pillinger, 2023; Traliant, 2025*

Step 4 concerns building awareness and practical competence across the team. A policy will be more likely to change behaviour if workers understand what violence and harassment look like in practice, know what to do when something happens and feel confident enough to act. Before designing training or awareness activities, the guide recommends assessing workers' existing perceptions and level of awareness, so that measures are targeted rather than generic. Short toolbox talks, role-plays and regular reminders can be more effective than one-off formal training, as they build practical confidence alongside knowledge. Bystander intervention also deserves specific attention. The guide introduces the 5Ds framework (Direct, Distract, Delegate, Delay, Document) as a practical tool giving workers concrete, low-risk options to respond safely. Workers are more likely to step in when they have such options and know they will be protected from retaliation. New and temporary workers should receive the same core messages from the outset, and the day-to-day behaviour of the business owner or manager sets the standard for the rest of the team.

References used: *Arnetz et al., 2017; Dalsbø et al., 2025; Escartín, 2016; ILO, 2020; Leake et al., 2025; Nielsen et al., 2024; Pillinger, 2023; Right To Be, 2017; Wu et al., 2019; Zhang, Zou & Zhang, 2025*

Step 5 addresses how to respond when an incident occurs. Immediate priorities are ensuring safety, separating those involved if necessary and making a factual record while details are fresh. Support for the person affected should begin immediately and not wait for the investigation to conclude: practical and psychosocial support, flexible working arrangements and signposting to appropriate external services matter as much as the investigation itself. The response should be calm, structured and proportionate: all parties should be heard before conclusions are drawn, and information should be shared on a need-to-know basis. The guide distinguishes between less serious or isolated incidents, where the incident log may be sufficient, and more serious or repeated cases, where a structured investigation including interviews may be needed. In small teams, involving an external adviser may be necessary to ensure neutrality. Once the incident is resolved, attention should turn to addressing behaviour proportionately, preventing retaliation and feeding a brief confidential review directly back into Step 6.

References used: *ILO, 2024; Ooijens, 2020*

Step 6 focuses on monitoring, review and improvement. MSEs are encouraged to establish a simple but regular review routine, including post-incident reflection and periodic review of hazards, preventive measures, reporting routes and lessons learned. Indicators may include incidents, near misses, informal concerns, sickness absence, turnover and worker feedback on speaking up. The guide recommends a short annual review to take stock of what is working, whether new risks have emerged and what one or two practical improvements could be made for the year ahead. Review responsibilities and processes should be agreed in advance, so they do not depend on who happens to remember or have time. The cycle is explicitly iterative: findings from incidents and the review should feed back into renewed risk assessment and preventive measures. Finally, the guide highlights that prevention arrangements should be revisited whenever the organisation changes, for instance when new workers, tasks or communication channels are introduced, and that consistent follow-through builds worker trust over time, making it more likely that concerns are raised early.

References used: *Escartín, 2016; Leake et al., 2025; Nielsen et al., 2024; Zara et al., 2024; Zhang, Zou & Zhang, 2025*

Policy implications

The guide is addressed to MSE business owners and managers, but the evidence assembled in its development also has implications beyond the workplace level. The five implications below reflect what the evidence suggests for policymakers, labour inspectorates, sector bodies and OSH advisory services. These actors can help shape the conditions under which MSEs manage psychosocial risks, including violence and harassment, through regulation, funding, inspection frameworks and capacity-building measures that individual employers cannot access alone.

1. Shift inspection and enforcement guidance towards early intervention

Violence and harassment typically develop gradually, through incivility, unresolved tension and repeated disrespect, long before such conduct becomes severe or formally reportable. Labour inspectorates and enforcement bodies should reflect this in their guidance and inspection frameworks,

signalling clearly that early-stage inappropriate behaviour is a valid trigger for preventive action and that a proactive, upstream approach is both expected and supported. In practice, this means updating inspection checklists, audit criteria and compliance guidance to include early warning indicators alongside formal policy requirements.

2. Prioritise primary prevention through public funding and support programmes

Violence and harassment are shaped primarily by working conditions, workload, role ambiguity, inadequate supervision, unmanaged conflict and cultures that tolerate disrespect, rather than by individual characteristics of the worker alone. Public funding for OSH support, sector toolkits and advisory services should therefore prioritise upstream, organisational-level measures over reactive approaches such as post-incident training or complaint handling alone. Concretely, this means directing resources towards tools that can help MSEs improve workload planning, role clarity, supervision quality, early conflict management and worker consultation, all of which are effective risk-reduction strategies.

3. Develop and promote proportionate risk assessment tools designed for MSE capacity

Prevention can only be sustainable in MSEs if it fits their operational reality: limited time, informal management arrangements and limited administrative support mean that most MSEs simply do not have the capacity to develop their own tools and procedures from scratch. Policymakers and sector bodies should therefore prioritise the development and active dissemination of ready-to-use solutions, risk assessment templates, model policies, reporting frameworks and review checklists, which employers can adapt and apply without specialist knowledge. At the same time, these solutions should be designed with adaptability in mind: there is no one-size-fits-all answer, and MSEs should be encouraged and supported to tailor ready-made tools to their own sector, size and working context rather than applying them mechanically. The goal is to lower the barrier to getting started, not to replace the judgement and ownership of the employer. EU-OSHA's OiRA platform is a good example of what this can look like in practice: a free, accessible risk assessment tool designed with small businesses in mind, which is flexible enough to be adapted to the specific organisational setting. Regulatory guidance should explicitly endorse this proportionate approach, affirming that ready-to-use, adaptable tools are a legitimate and sufficient starting point for MSEs, and that the goal is workable, context-sensitive prevention rather than the unnecessary replication of formal systems designed for larger organisations.

4. Strengthen basic reporting and response capacity through accessible, low-cost measures

The guide identifies several challenges for MSEs: workers may hesitate to speak up, maintaining anonymity may be difficult and employers may be unsure how to respond fairly without HR support. A key barrier is that existing regulatory frameworks and guidance are frequently designed with larger organisations in mind, implying levels of formality, documentation and procedural complexity that are disproportionate for MSEs and can discourage action altogether. Policymakers and employer organisations should therefore work to clarify what is actually required of MSEs, distinguishing between legal obligations and good practice recommendations, and signalling clearly that simple, proportionate arrangements are sufficient. Minimum credible standards, such as designating a named contact person, providing more than one reporting route, stating anti-retaliation commitments and ensuring access to appropriate external support for more serious cases, should be promoted as a realistic and legitimate baseline, rather than a stepping stone to more elaborate systems.

5. Treat third-party violence and harassment as a structural and organisational issue in sector-level regulation and guidance

The risk of violence and harassment from customers, clients, patients or service users can be influenced by service design and working conditions, including communication failures, insufficient workforce capacity, unclear procedures and poor complaint handling, as well as by the behaviour of individuals. Sector regulators and industry bodies should embed this understanding into sector-specific guidance and standards, encouraging measures that reduce predictable friction points as part of normal service delivery design. This includes clearer customer information, appropriate workforce planning at peak times, complaint management standards, environmental safeguards and buddy systems, all of which fall within the influence of employers and, in some sectors, of commissioners and regulators.

Conclusions

MSEs face a distinctive set of challenges when it comes to preventing and responding to violence and harassment in the workplace. Limited time, restricted budgets, informal management structures and

limited access to dedicated HR or OSH support mean that MSEs are often less equipped to recognise risks early or respond consistently. At the same time, the closeness of small teams means that a single incident can quickly affect the whole workplace, eroding trust, disrupting operations and putting pressure on everyone involved.

The guide presented in this summary offers a practical six-step pathway adapted to the realities of MSEs, where decisions can be made quickly, communication is direct and even modest changes can have a meaningful impact. Rather than asking MSEs to replicate the formal systems of larger organisations, it shows that meaningful progress can be achieved through feasible, proportionate and consistent measures. Early identification of hazards, clear behavioural expectations, accessible reporting routes, fair responses and regular review can together reduce harmful exposure and strengthen resilience over time.

Ultimately, the guide's central message is that violence and harassment in the workplace are best addressed as part of mainstream psychosocial risk management and everyday work organisation, not as a marginal issue to be considered only after serious harm has occurred. For MSEs in particular, where the consequences of inaction can be felt quickly and widely, effective prevention and response is not an additional burden but an integral part of responsible management and good business practice.

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