



Press Release

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Recession Threat Could Endanger Employees

FACT:

During the last recession in 1991/92, the estimated number of incidents of violence at work rose sharply from 847,000 to 1,075,000.

The personal safety charity, Suzy Lamplugh Trust, today warned employers not to cut corners with the personal safety of their staff in order to save money if the down turn in the economy means tightening their purse strings this year.

Chief Executive of the Trust, Steven Gauge, says:

"If budgets are tight, it can be tempting for employers to think they can economise on staff safety but, as the statistics indicate, this is the worst possible time to economise in this area."

Taking risks with staff safety in order to economise – for example using one employee to undertake a job when for safety reasons it should be two - is a false economy because it can lead to a high turnover of staff; lack of motivation, low morale, high levels of sick leave - and, in the case of an employee suffering violence, abuse or even stress, the employer could be at risk of litigation.

The case of a shop manager who was left fearing for her life during a robbery at a city off-license in 2003 illustrates the financial impact of legal action.

Jacqueline Collins won £179,000 in damages from her employers in a landmark court decision when a judge ruled that she was placed in greater jeopardy of violence by bosses at Victoria Wine because double-manning had not been brought in as a safeguard.

Lord Carloway stated that: *“This was a shop where physical violence against staff was, or ought to have been, anticipated. I gained the impression from the firm’s evidence that their policy on double-manning had little to do with the safety of their staff, but was based on an economic consideration.”*

Even before such settlements the costs are significant, with the HSE estimating that just to investigate a violent incident costs between £17 - £19K.

Gauge added:

“Employers should remember that it is not only their responsibility but in their own interest to ensure the safety and well-being of their staff at all times, no matter how tight the purse strings.”

ENDS

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Notes to Editors:

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust, a registered charity, is the leading charity for personal safety. The Trust works to raise awareness of the importance of personal safety in order to help people to avoid violence and aggression and live safer, more confident lives.

The Trust works alongside government, the police, the educational establishment, public bodies and the business sector to encourage safety wherever people may be at risk - in the home, at work, in public and in schools and colleges, on public transport and when travelling at home or abroad.

