

Page 3: Many workers in the healthcare sector are victims of violence. In the interview, Professor Thomas Gösling explains what he is calling for and discusses his experiences.

Let's talk about BEM!

For 20 years now, company integration management – *betriebliches Eingliederungsmanagement*, or BEM – has been mandatory for companies. However, it is not being offered to all employees. And yet BEM represents a win-win situation for all involved – for companies and for employees. It's time to take stock.

Returning to work is often difficult following a long-term or recurring illness, or a serious accident. What can help, for example, are adapted working hours and tasks, or technical aids. For 20 years, employers have been legally required to offer company integration management to their employees and, if necessary, to take individual measures to ensure a positive return to the work. However, many companies are not making use of the opportunities provided by BEM. The Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (BAuA) show in their 2018 Employee Survey – conducted in cooperation with the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) – that only



Source: DGUV

In these times of a shortage of skilled workers and an ageing workforce, BEM is a key element in providing companies with a competitive advantage. Employees and their expertise are retained in the organisation.

around 40% of workers who were potentially eligible received a BEM offer. Of these, almost 70% accepted the offer. In smaller organisations, in the skilled trades and in the service sector, the proportion of eligible employees being offered BEM is even lower than 40%. “Companies are passing up an opportunity,” says Dr Edlyn Höller, Deputy Director General of the DGUV, adding “we also need to look at why companies are not utilising BEM to retain key skilled workers in the company”.

BEM is part of a positive corporate culture

The BAuA survey offers some insights. The results indicate that the BEM is most likely to be used in organisations already committed to the health of their employees, where supervisors manage using praise and recognition to support the health of their workers, and where there is a positive atmosphere among the workforce. BEM is therefore also an issue relating to corporate culture and to existing health-related structures. In these times of a shortage of skilled workers and an ageing workforce, BEM is a key element in providing companies with a competitive advantage. Employees, and therefore also

their knowledge and expertise, are retained in the company. And those looking after the health and safety of their employees will also be regarded, both internally and externally, as valued employers. Employees also stay in gainful employment and, in doing so, ease the burden on the social security systems.

Cooperation with statutory pension insurance

German Social Accident Insurance and the German Pension Insurance Association have been working together since 2016 to provide comprehensive advice for organisations on BEM, prevention and workplace health management. “Our aim is for advisers to be familiar with the offers of the respective partner and with how these links up, and for them to take on a signposting and guiding role,” explains Höller. Joint training, networking and public relations work performed by social insurance institutions and other stakeholders such as the German Trade Union Federation is ongoing in the background. “We will continue to promote the BEM and to support companies with this,” underlines Höller.

DGUV and German Pension Insurance Association host a networking event:
Gesundheit fördern, Fachkräfte sichern (Promote health, retain skilled workers): 20 years of BEM

26 September 2024

DGUV e.V., Glinkastraße 40, 10117 Berlin



Protecting health from the beginning

For many young people, 1 September marks the start of a new phase in their lives. It is the start of the vocational school year and is when most trainees set out on the path to their future careers. Many hopes and dreams are associated with this step. Not only are they looking for professional success, but also health and satisfaction in their jobs – a goal which we as German Social Accident Insurance are fully behind. Our objective is to highlight to employees and employers the ways in which they can promote safety and health at work. It is particularly important that these subjects are integrated as part of the training. Training companies and vocational schools have a key role to play here. They should explain health risks to young people at an early stage and make them aware of the importance of occupational safety. This is how they lay the foundation for a safe and healthy professional career. The German Social Accident Insurance institutions for trade and industry and the public sector are on hand to provide advice and support. Our prevention programme, “Jugend will sich-erleben” (“Young people want to live life, and safely too”) – JWSL for short – also helps trainees start out in their professional lives in a safe and healthy way. It shows them the importance of ensuring safe and healthy conduct from the outset. By encouraging trainees to take responsibility for their own safety, the JWSL programme creates a culture of awareness extending far beyond the period of training. Those who learn, early on, to look after themselves and others lay the foundation for a long, successful and, above all, healthy working life.


Yours Dr Stefan Hussy
Director General of the DGUV

“Occupational health and safety and standardisation” symposium

To mark its 30th anniversary, the Commission for Occupational Health and Safety and Standardization (KAN) is hosting a discussion. The symposium “**Occupational health and safety and standardisation – between global harmonisation and national interests**” will take place on 13 November 2024 at the DGUV in Berlin.

The focus is on the political significance of standardisation. For many countries, it is a strategic tool for asserting national economic and socio-political interests. This leads to friction between the standardisation process with its increasingly international focus and, for example, the European system of law and standardisation.

In its role as the collective voice of employees, employers, the federal government, the federal states and statutory accident insurance, KAN has been representing the interests of occupational health and safety in national, European and international standardisation for 30 years.



Source: KAN

“Today, KAN is an integral part of the German occupational health and safety landscape,” explains Peer-Oliver Villwock, current Chair of KAN.

Full details of the symposium:
www.kan.de/en/30-years-of-kan/

The fight against work-related cancer goes on

Every year in the EU, more than 100,000 people die from work-related cancer. The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work and the European Commission therefore came together in 2016 and launched the “Roadmap on Carcinogens”. The programme is now being extended by a further four years.

The aim of the programme is to reduce exposure to carcinogens in European workplaces, to raise awareness of the risks from carcinogens in the workplace, to support people affected and to encour-

age innovation. The Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has also joined the initiative.

The extension of the programme – Roadmap 3.0 – is focused on developing accessible information and tools to support and involve users. The plan is to launch a new website in the autumn that will provide companies, employees and occupational safety experts with answers on how to deal with carcinogens.

www.roadmaponcarcinogens.eu

Good to know!

Trainee programme “Jugend will sich-erleben” (“Young people want to live life, and safely too”)

German Social Accident Insurance’s prevention programme for trainees is launching its new year of campaigning. This time, it’s all about the topic of ‘musculoskeletal stress’. With the slogan of “Beweg was! Fit im Job. Stark in die Zukunft.” (Get moving! Fit for work. Strong for the future.) trainees are being made aware of the risks of musculoskeletal disorders. They learn how to lift, carry, push and pull correctly, what stress has to do with the back and that it is smart to use technical aids.

www.jwsl.de (German only)



“Violence in hospital should be an absolute taboo”

Many workers in the healthcare sector are victims of violence. Professor Thomas Gösling from the hospital in Braunschweig was also attacked. **In the interview, he talks about the incident, preventive measures and what he is demanding of policy-makers.**



Professor Gösling, you are the senior consultant at the Department of Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgery in Braunschweig hospital. Last year, you were subjected to a violent attack in the hospital. You were hit by a relative and ended up in a coma. The relative became aggressive because a life-threatening emergency meant the discussion of an X-ray had to be delayed and the relative did not want to wait any longer. He insulted and threatened your secretary. You attempted to calm him down. Despite your attempts at de-escalation, the man assaulted you physically. Has this incident changed you?

Yes, it has. The incident was certainly dramatic. I was already unconscious and the man continued to strike my head. It took a member of staff to stop him before the police then arrived. I then woke up in the CT unit with severe concussion and lacerations to my face. Luckily, I didn't suffer any lasting damage. But it could easily have turned out very differently. I have also processed the incident well psychologically. I am quite a resilient person. And it was probably a good thing I wasn't aware for most of it. I do believe that this incident might have been enough to break someone. It was terrifying to see how aggressive this perpetrator was and how nobody could calm him down. I am certainly more cautious today and would no longer try to calm down people who are as angry as that on my own.

In your view, is violence in hospitals on the rise?

There are certainly more conflicts, and violent incidents are also on the increase. The potential for conflict is particularly high in accident and emergency departments. This is where irritable, stressed patients in exceptional circumstances come into contact with overworked staff – and often where unrealistic expectations come up against reality. And the reality is that accident and emergency departments are often overflowing, which can result in long waiting times, misunderstandings and frustration. Some

people do not understand that life-threatening and severe emergencies are of course always treated first. Or, due to a lack of knowledge, patients come with health problems which are not at all emergencies and for which they would normally go to a doctor. In these cases, outside A&E opening times, you can contact the GP on-call service locally or the nationwide patient service on 116 117. And then there are some members of the public who actually come to the accident and emergency out of convenience, instead of making a doctor's appointment. And that is really not acceptable.



And the reality is that A&E departments are often overflowing, and this can result in long waiting times, misunderstandings and frustration.”

Is there a violence prevention plan at your hospital?

Yes. We have a de-escalation management team in the hospital and there are preventive measures such as training which can be accessed by members of staff who are interested. The feedback from participants is very good – this is thanks to practical tips on violence prevention and valuable advice on what to do in an emergency. We are also currently in discussions with the police regarding further technical measures to provide greater security.

As a senior consultant, do you also feel personally responsible for creating a safe working environment?

This is an important matter. Violence in hospital should be an absolute taboo and we have zero tolerance when it comes to

violence. This is why I am also supporting the #Gewalt-Angehen (Fight Violence) campaign. I want to use this to campaign for non-violence and respectful coexistence and to urge everyone to report incidents of violence, or to report them to the police.

What should policy-makers be doing to make your day-to-day working life safer?

Hospitals are overstretched, understaffed and underfunded. This inevitably leads to more conflicts and, fundamentally, this situation urgently needs improving. The problem will otherwise only get worse. And then even more people will switch careers or young people will no longer even want to train in medicine or in the care professions. In view of the alarming increase in acts of violence, I would also like to see policy-makers providing support in the form of subsidies. Hospitals are currently having to cover the entire costs of anti-violence measures themselves.

What can each of us do to prevent violence?

The same rules must apply in a hospital as apply everywhere else. So, this means treating each other with respect. Everyone should be looking out and caring for everyone else. If somebody sees that a conflict is brewing, they should – where possible, and while ensuring their own safety – intervene and get help.

**#Gewalt
Angehen**

GEMEINSAM STARK
GEGEN GEWALT.

#GewaltAngehen (Fight Violence)

is a campaign run by the German social accident insurance institutions for trade and industry and for the public sector and their umbrella organisation, DGUV.

→ www.dguv.de/gewalt-angehen
(German only)

Companies are preparing for climate change

How are German companies responding to the effects of climate change? This question was put to company doctors and occupational health and safety specialists by the Institute for Work and Health of the German Social Accident Insurance (IAG). Around 38 per cent of the 418 respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that climate change has already impacted on jobs and work activities in recent years. A further 34 percent somewhat agreed with this statement.

A range of risks

Almost half of respondents primarily consider health problems caused by heat at work and psychological stress responses such as irritability, aggression and anxiety to be major risks at work resulting from climate change. In each case, however, around a third also named the following as negative impacts on the safety and health of employees: more frequent allergies, mental illnesses, risk of accidents due to heat exhaustion or lack of sleep caused by heat, animal-borne diseases, risk of accidents as a result of severe weather or flooding, eye and skin damage due to UV radiation.

Companies are taking action

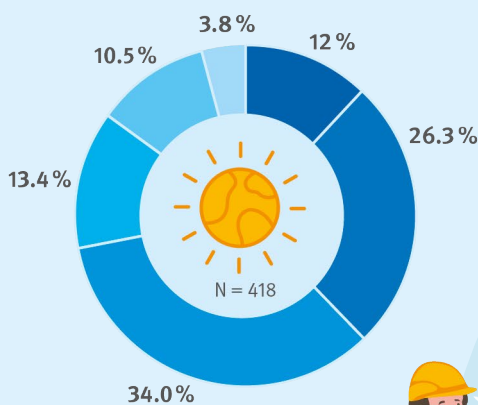
The majority of companies (almost 70 per cent) have therefore already introduced measures to counter the consequences of climate change or are planning to do so. Shading and adapted work clothing are mentioned in particular. Flexible working hours, sufficient hydration as well as sun protection clothing and sunscreen are also mentioned often. In the case of companies which have not yet implemented any measures, occupational health and safety specialists see the main reason for this as being a lack of awareness of the problem (60 percent).

To the survey results:

→ www.dguv.de/klimawandel > Downloads > DGUV 2024 climate change survey (German only)

IMPACTS

Climate change has impacted on jobs and work activities in recent years.



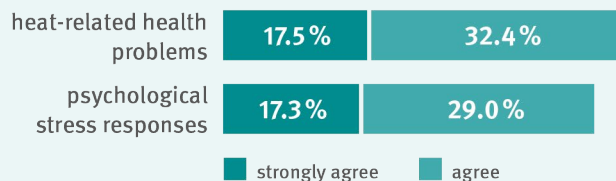
- strongly agree
- agree
- somewhat agree
- somewhat disagree
- disagree
- strongly disagree



TOP-2-RISKS

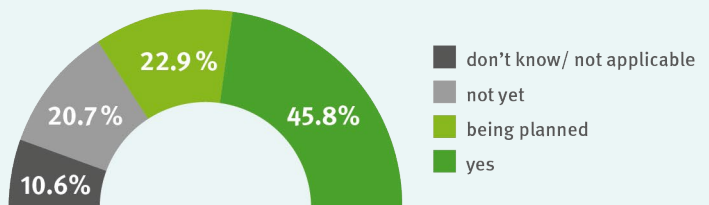
RISKS

What do you consider to be risks to the safety and health of workers in the context of climate change?



MEASURES

Measures have been taken in the organisation to counter risks to the safety and health of employees.



Imprint

Published by: German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV), Glinkastr. 40, 10117 Berlin; **Publishing committee:** Dr Renate Colella (Chair), Prof Dr med. Axel Ekkernkamp, Frauke Füsers, Markus Hofmann, Gabriele Pappai, Dr Udo Schöpf, Karl-Sebastian Schulte, Ilka Wölfle; **Editorship:** Britta Ibalde (legally responsible for content), Kathrin Baltscheit; **Editorial team:** Kathrin Baltscheit, Katharina Braun, Katrin Wildt, Arlén Buchholz, Sebastian Driever (email: kompakt@dguv.de); **Publisher:** Content5 AG, Welfenstraße 22, 81541 München; **Printed by:** MedienSchiff Bruno, Moorfleeter Deich 312a | 22113 Hamburg; **Image sources of portraits:** p. 2: Jan Röhl/DGUV; p. 3: DGUV; **office responsible in terms of the General Data Protection Regulation (DSGVO) for the distribution of the newsletter:** German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV). The purpose of data processing is public relations: the targeted communication of current topics from the field of social accident insurance. The legal basis of the processing is our legitimate interest in accordance with Art. 6(1)(f) GDPR or, provided that you have granted your consent to data processing, Art. 6 (1) (a) GDPR. You can unsubscribe at any time from having the print newsletter sent to you and stop the related processing of your data by objecting to the data processing. If you have granted your consent to the processing of your data, you can also revoke this at any time. **Revocation/objection:** If you would like to unsubscribe from the print newsletter, please send an e-mail to kompakt@dguv.de; for further information on data protection, in particular on your rights as a data subject, please refer to the data protection notice on our website: www.dguv.de.

