

15 February 2024

Health and Safety - a workplace issue for everyone

Read about the benefits of becoming a union health and safety representative. Why not volunteer to become a representative for your workplace?

PCS firmly believes that health and safety (H&S) in the workplace is an important issue for all workers. Every year, thousands of people suffer accidents and ill-health at work; most of which could be avoided.

The Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated that health and safety risks affect us all whether you are an outsourced worker providing services in government buildings or a directly employed civil servant/public sector worker.

That is why trade union H&S representatives are so important. PCS H&S representatives perform essential duties to ensure everybody in a building is kept safe, including:

- conducting regular H&S inspections of buildings,
- reviewing risk assessments,
- attending H&S building safety committees which cover all employees,
- raising issues of concern that need to be remedied and monitoring that any remedies are put in place,
- reviewing accident reports
- investigating H&S matters to ensure that every building is a safe place to work.

The work of a union H&S representative is covered by law. The law allows union H&S representatives to have paid time off during working hours to carry out their duties. This includes paid time off to receive union H&S representative training.

Becoming a PCS H&S representative is one of the many roles that PCS members employed in outsourced facilities management and security staff can take on in their workplace. Arguably, facilities management and security staff are exposed to more H&S risks than colleagues that are office based e.g. dealing with hazardous substances on a daily basis, a higher risk of slips, trips, and falls,

performing repetitive tasks which may lead to musculoskeletal disorders, less control over your working day and employment conditions which may lead to workplace stress.

We strongly encourage you to become a PCS H&S rep for your workplace. PCS has a network of H&S representatives that newer reps can call on for support and advice. PCS also organises health and safety representative briefings to share best practice. More information can be found on the [Health and Safety](#) section of the PCS website.

Being a PCS H&S representative can be exceptionally rewarding. The training and experience increase an individual's confidence and you develop skills that you can use to progress to other roles within your company. You also get the satisfaction of assisting your workmates with issues that make the workplace safer for everyone.

If you are interested in becoming a PCS H&S representative, speak to your local PCS representative or email outsourcedworkers@pcs.org.uk.