

The Right to Work in Safety and Health

According to the *Health and Safety at Work Act* (1974), employers must guarantee that nothing that happens at work makes workers ill or injures them. The health and safety of people in the workplace is regulated by the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act* (2005), which strengthens and updates¹ the provisions of the *Safety, Health and Welfare Act* (1989). It involves all employers, employees and self-employed people and sets out their rights and obligations, defining fines and penalties for people who violate the legislation.

People who are having bad experiences at work can become members of union legal services, organizations that tackle² injuries, illness, unfair dismissal, sex, race and age discrimination at work. Every year, unions win millions for redress and compensation to their associates.

But citizens are entitled to health rights also outside the workplace. In the United Kingdom, for example, everybody can refer to the National Health Service (NHS) that provides a wide range of health services, most of which are free of charge. Each country has its own national healthcare system, that deals with the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of disease, illness, and other physical and mental impairments. Unfortunately, access to health care varies across countries, groups and individuals, and it is influenced by social and economic conditions as well as the health policies.

Many governments have established universal health care, complying with all the expenses through private businesses or individuals, in accordance with an explicit policy to ensure access for all of its citizens and to fund health research. In other countries, however, citizens have to pay for health care goods and services as well as private sector professionals in the medical and pharmaceutical industries have to develop research with self-funding.



Glossary

- ¹ modernizes
² deal with

↓ READING COMPREHENSION

Answer the following questions.

- 1 Which acts regulate the health and safety of people at work?
- 2 What are union legal services?
- 3 What does the NHS provide in the UK?
- 4 What is the function of a national healthcare system?
- 5 What is access to the health care influenced by?

↓ MATCHING

Match each of the following work-related diseases with its probable cause.

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 Carpal tunnel syndrome | A Heavy lifting |
| 2 Stress | B Exposure to chemicals |
| 3 Repetitive strain injury | C Rapid finger and wrist motions |
| 4 Asthma | D Working in the cold |
| 5 Temperature | E Working time, overworking, bullying |

↓ VOCABULARY

Explain in your own words the meaning of the following terms and expressions.

- | | |
|------------------------|-------|
| 1 Strengthen | |
| 2 Self-employed people | |
| 3 Unfair dismissal | |
| 4 Redress | |
| 5 Diagnosis | |
| 6 Self-funding | |