Government Health & Safety Lead

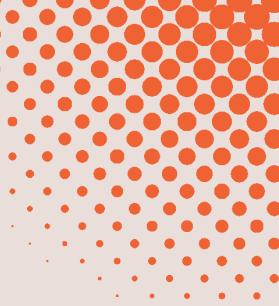# Hierarchy of controls for psychological health and safety

The general principle of a hierarchy of controls (as used for physical health and safety risks) can be applied to psychosocial (mental health) risks - with a few adaptations. In managing psychosocial risks in your organisation, it may be helpful to consider an adapted hierarchy of controls for understanding the different types of controls or interventions you could select.

Physical hazards | Psychosocial hazards

Eliminate
Remove the sources of harm (eg equipment, substances or work processes).

Eliminate
Remove the psychosocial hazard to eliminate the risk of harm from this aspect of work

Substitute
Substitute (wholly or partly) the hazard giving rise to the risk with something that gives rise to a lesser risk

Re-design
Fundamentally redesign how work is done, including roles, responsibilities, and the work environment

Isolate/engineer
Isolate the hazard giving rise to the risk to prevent any person coming into contact with it or use physical control measures including mechanical devices or processes

Adjust
Make adjustments to existing practices, substitute tasks with safer alternatives, or increase resources to meet demands

Change the work

Change the worker

Administrative
Using safe methods of work, processes or procedures designed to minimise risk

Educate
Train workers to understand work policies, procedures and expectations

PPE
Using safety equipment to protect against harm. PPE acts by reducing exposure to, or contact with, the hazard.

Promote
Provide opportunities to build resilience to withstand psychological hazards

Inspired by the adapted hierarchy of controls for psychosocial hazards by Bupa (2022)

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