

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – 2 MARCH 2017 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Workplace Health and Safety

Question reference number: 44 (HS 48)

Senator: Watt

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 21 April 2017

Number of pages: 1

Question:

- a) Please provide details on the risk assessment undertaken as a part of the preparation for the implementation of the Department's introduced automated compliance and debt recovery work?
- b) Please provide details on what specific steps were taken by the Department to ensure the health and safety of staff and customers were not put at risk as a result of the implementation of the introduced automated compliance and debt recovery work?

Answer:

- a) Risk assessments for the measure were completed in line with the Department's project management methodology. A comprehensive risk assessment was undertaken at the commencement of the measure and risks are continuously monitored.
- b) The safety and well-being of staff and recipients is a top priority for the Department. Significant focus and effort has been invested over the last 18 months to continue to develop and improve the Department's approach to the prevention and management of customer aggression and the customer service skills needed by staff to respond to our recipients. This work has included the development of new customer aggression emergency response guidelines, the development of new service skills training and corresponding training on how to prevent, de-escalate and respond to aggression, whether this is face to face or over the phone.

In addition, the Department has developed and launched a new psychological health strategy for our staff to create an inclusive and positive workplace culture that minimises psychosocial risks and promotes mental health and wellbeing.