

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH, SAFETY & WELFARE REVIEW 2004/5

Accident / occupational ill health statistics

Employees

During the period April 1st 2004 to March 31st 2005, there were 30 accident book entries involving employees, the number of entries for the previous twelve months was 25. Four of the entries were due a design problem with newly installed toilet roll dispensers which was overcome by specifying Pendimatic rolls. As a consequence the overall level remains consistent.

Under the principal causative headings, the breakdown in accident type was as follows (the figures for 2003/4 are in brackets):

Bruising	– 11 (7)
Minor cuts	– 10 (5)
Trips / slips	– 4 (5)
Musculoskeletal	– 3 (4)

Reportable Accidents

There were two accidents that were notified to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). Both involved employees who were absent from work for more than 3 days excluding the day on which the accident occurred. The figure for reportable accidents for the previous 12 month period was 3, all members of the public who were taken to hospital.

Non Employees

There were 40 entries for the period in question of which 32 were at the Meadowside Centre, 3 were in the Guildhall and 5 in Museums. Of the 32 accident book entries at the Meadowside Centre, 27 were sport related injuries.

The number of entries for the previous 12 months was 34 of which 24 were sport related injuries at Meadowside.

River Park Leisure Centre is operated by DC Leisure and accident statistics are forwarded to the Recreation Officer in the Communities Directorate. The figures for 2004/5 are listed below.

River Park Leisure Centre

For the period April 1st 2004 to March 31st 2005, there were 349 accident book entries of which 10 were notifiable under RIDDOR. The breakdown is as follows:

DC Leisure employees	- 12
Sport related (Leisure centre / outside courts and pitches)	- 256
Non sport related	- 56
Off site (footpaths / car park)	- 25

Reported Incidents (Verbal abuse / threats)

There were 19 recorded incidents where an employee was threatened or subjected to verbal abuse and the perpetrator's home address could be identified and he / she resided in the district. In addition there were 6 recorded incidents involving parking attendants. The corresponding figures for 2004/5 were 31 and 9 respectively.

Occupational ill health

There were 18 referrals to the Occupational Health advisor during 2004/2005.

Safety related training

During the period April 1st 2004 and March 31st 2005 the following safety training courses / briefings were organised:

- Corporate induction training – 3 health and safety modules.
- Manual handling – 2 half day courses (14 attendees).
- Asbestos awareness – 4 half day briefings for staff and contractors (184 attendees).
- Construction Design & Management Regulations – 1 day course for engineers and Property Services staff (20 attendees).
- Dealing with aggressive customers – 2 one day courses for frontline staff.
- Briefing for office support staff on manual handling and post room security (10 attendees).
- Risk assessment training for departmental assessors – 1 one day course (10 attendees).
- Fire safety – Half day course for fire marshals / scheme managers including practical training (17 attendees).
- Specialist training for extra care sheltered housing scheme staff and mobile wardens in handling elderly / frail residents – 3 one day courses (23 attendees).
- Briefing for trainee Winchester Area Tourist Guide Association guides on risk assessment and event planning (20 attendees).
- Lift entrapment briefings – Parking Attendants / Caretakers Winnall high rise flats.

Accident trends

Nationally, slips, trips and falls are the biggest cause of absence due to physical injury. These are also the primary causes of accidents involving members of the public and this is born out by the statistics relating to visitors on Council premises.

The second major cause of absence is musculoskeletal injuries / conditions that are normally the result of inappropriate manual handling techniques or poor posture and working practices brought about by unsuitable furniture and poorly set up workstations. The number of recorded accidents remains low and in general terms reflect the national picture although in purely numerical terms, minor cuts and bruising due to other factors were responsible for the most accident book entries.

Conclusion

Winchester City Council continues to have a low accident rate as would be expected for an authority that does not have a Direct Services Organisation and has contracted out the management of the principal leisure centre. The introduction of a revised format for accident books in January 2004 has improved performance monitoring as all accident book entries will now be entered on a separate page and must be forwarded to the Health and Safety Officer on completion. This change was in response to data protection issues.

From the analysis of the accident book entries there are no areas where specific action is likely to lead to a reduction due to a change in work practices, (other than the aforementioned 'spate' of washroom accidents). The number of working days lost due to accidents remains very low.

With regards verbal abuse / threats, there has been a decrease in the number of recorded incidents.

Benchmarking

The Hampshire Safety Officers' Group has set up a working party to review benchmarking for the occupational health, safety and welfare advisory service and work, in conjunction with South East Employers, is progressing,. The major issue has been identifying like authorities, particularly where services, or elements thereof, have been contracted out or grouped with other work activities.

Review of Action Plan 2004/5

Management of Asbestos in non domestic premises

- Asbestos Policy amended to reflect legislative changes and proposed action plan. Corporate strategy drawn up.
- Asbestos survey of non domestic premises completed by specialist surveyors, sites prioritised according to risk and a programme of asbestos removal / mark and manage instigated. Tenants advised in writing where responsibility for asbestos management rests with the lessee.

Occupation of Athelstan House

- Transfer of staff to second floor office accommodation and agreement with Hampshire County Council, lessees of the ground and first floors, on joint health and safety issues completed bar lift entrapment training. The latter pending changes in personnel following corporate restructuring.

Stress management

Ongoing - See programme for 2005/6.

Inter-Authority Auditing

Ongoing - See programme for 2005/6.

Accident and occupational ill health absence statistics

- Statistics for accident and occupational ill health absence and specialist referrals now collated on a three monthly basis and presented in the annual review.

Departmental Safety Co-ordinators

- Co-ordinators nominated for all directorates, briefing sessions arranged and guidance notes on the safety co-ordinators role issued.
- Post corporate restructuring, the coverage will need to be reviewed.

Customer Service Centre

The key issues such as environmental considerations (heating / lighting / ventilation), ergonomics, staff training and working practices were identified and have, as far as physical constraints allow, been incorporated into the design of the new facility.

The Customer Service Centre is scheduled to open in June 2005 and the primary role will be monitoring the service, particularly during the inaugural period.

Vaccination Policy

- High risk posts have been risk assessed and a vaccination programme agreed with Winchester and Eastleigh NHS Healthcare Trust.
- Guidance on work related infection risks has been posted on the Intranet.

Managing Work Related Road Safety

- Revised documentation has been drawn up and administrative checks have been instigated. The Motor Risk Group is now reviewing the arrangements for casual users.
- Competence checks will be introduced for the drivers of Council owned (badged) vehicles and, where required, driver training will be arranged.

Fire Risk Assessments

Fire risk assessments for corporate sites, including sheltered housing schemes which are classed as places of work, have been reviewed and amended accordingly.

However, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order, due to come into effect during 2005 has been delayed and will not be enacted until early 2006.

Scheme Managers / Care Assistants / Mobile Warden's Handbook

Sheltered Services Policies and Procedures handbook issued to supported services staff, contents includes a module on health and safety, fire procedures, communal area inspection checklists and associated documentation.

Supported People Programme

Fire and general staff risk assessments for all sheltered housing schemes and homeless hostels reviewed and amended as necessary and a regime of site inspections instigated.

External assessment of the supported housing service scheduled for June / July 2005.

HEALTH & SAFETY ACTION PLAN 2005/6

Annual Action Plan

The Health & Safety Action Plan highlights the principal occupational health safety and welfare issues that will need to be addressed. The programme is not exhaustive and will be amended if other specific topics arise during the period in question i.e. in response to a change in health and safety legislation.

Some health and safety issues by their very nature will be cyclic, particularly in areas such as health and safety training for staff in 'at risk work activities' and the review and updating of corporate health and safety policies, procedures and guidance notes.

Although all the topics, by definition, are health and safety related, the lead officer will not necessarily be the Health and Safety Officer. An example being the opening of the customer services centre which could potentially have health and safety implications due to the significant changes in working practices. However the management issues will be the responsibility of Finance which will be the lead Directorate.

Training

Health and safety training has been targeted at the principal risk areas such as manual handling and dealing with potentially aggressive customers and as such these courses are run on at least an annual basis to pick up newly appointed staff and to provide refresher training as required. This cycle of safety training will continue with additional courses organised on an ad hoc basis in response to any changes in health and safety legislation that would impact on the Council's work activities.

The recent corporate restructuring has inevitably led to an imbalance in some directorates with regards employees who have specific health and safety functions, examples being risk assessors, fire marshals and display screen assessment co-ordinators. As a consequence, additional training in some specialisms will be required to ensure adequate cover.

Stress Management

Aim – See Action Plan 2004/5.

A stress management policy and guidance has been drawn up and posted on the Intranet and the monitoring of stress related sickness absence has been instigated by the Human Resources Directorate.

However, the published guidance from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) differed from the consultative document, primarily with regards the 85% satisfactory feedback criteria. In addition the supporting software from the HSE has had to be revised.

The current position is that the staff stress questionnaire will be amended and sent out to all staff in July. The City Council has responded to a request from the HSE for local authorities to pilot the new stress management standards and confirmation is awaited. A series of management stress awareness briefings will be run when the results of the questionnaire have been analysed.

Lead Officer – Principal Human Resources Officer.
Input from Health & Safety Officer / Training Officer.

Revised completion date – November 2005.

Inter- Authority Auditing

Aim – See Action Plan 2004/5.

The main purpose of the programme is to assess member authorities' internal safety management systems to identify best practice and compliance with HSG 65 'Successful health and safety management'.

Under the original timetable, Winchester City Council was to be assessed in November / December 2004, which subsequently coincided with the corporate restructuring proposal. As a consequence, the assessment has been put back to 2005/6 and a revised timetable will be issued. The Health and Safety Officer has participated in the assessment of two neighbouring authorities and the Chairman of the Hampshire Safety Officers' Group has sent an Interim report on the completed assessments to all participating authorities.

Lead Officer – Health & Safety Officer

Completion date – December 2005.

Legionella

Aim – See Action Plan 2004/5.

A considerable amount of work has been completed, particularly with regards the identification of higher risk sites. To this end a regime of biocide treatment has been instigated at selected sites and the sheltered and extra care housing schemes have been surveyed.

The next stage is to formalise a management strategy and instigate an appropriate inspection regime. This will involve identifying leased sites where responsibility for water systems rests with the lessee.

Lead Officer – Chief Estates Officer
Input from Building Services Manager / Health & Safety Officer

Revised completion date – October 2005

Roles and Responsibilities

Aim -

Ensure that managerial health and safety roles and responsibilities have been identified, are written into job descriptions where appropriate and are subject to the appraisal process.

Lead Officer – Director of Human Resources

Completion date – March 2006

Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Information

Aim –

Review and update corporate health and safety policies, procedures and guidance notes on the Intranet health & safety page.

Lead Officer – Health & Safety Officer
Input from Web Development Officer

Completion date – Ongoing

Tree safety and assessment

Aim –

Following a number of serious incidents involving unsafe trees on local authority owned sites, the Health and Safety Executive has issued guidance on the implementation of risk assessment based tree inspections.

It is proposed to review the current arrangements for identifying dangerous / diseased trees in high risk areas such as play areas, parks and adjacent to major thoroughfares, record keeping and the implementation of remedial work.

Completion date – March 2006

Lead Officer – Environment Officer (Grounds)
Input from Landscape Team (Development Directorate)

Construction / Maintenance Projects

Aim –

Significant changes to the Construction Design and Management Regulations and the Construction (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations are planned. This will impact on construction, demolition and major refurbishment projects undertaken by, or on behalf of the Council. The specific implications arising from the changes will need to be identified, particularly with regard to contract specifications, staff training and contract monitoring.

Lead Officer – Health and Safety Officer
Input from Head of Engineering Services / Head of Contracts and Property Services

Completion date – January 2006

Abbey House

Aim –

A review of fire safety management has highlighted a number of shortcomings, primarily fire detection, means of escape and emergency lighting that need to be addressed.

Lead Officer – Chief Estates Officer
Input from Building Services Manager

Completion date – February 2006

Health & safety core training requirements / competencies

Aim –

It is a legal requirement for employers to provide for all their employees the information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, their health and safety at work. Different work activities will require specific health and safety training to ensure both compliance with the law and from a risk management (insurance) standpoint.

To further safeguard against employees not attending health and safety training courses pertinent to the work activity, and the potential liability issues, core topics will be identified and appended to job profiles. This will include periodic refresher training where appropriate.

Lead Officer – Training Officer

Completion date – October 2005