

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH, SAFETY & WELFARE REVIEW 2005/6

Accident / occupational ill health statistics

Employees

During the period April 1st 2005 to March 31st 2006, there were 17 accident book entries involving employees, the number of entries for the previous twelve months was 30.

Under the principal causative headings, the breakdown in accident type was as follows (the figures for 2004/5 are in brackets):

Bruising	– 2 (11)
Minor cuts	– 4 (10)
Trips / slips	– 4 (4)
Musculoskeletal	– 3 (3)

Reportable Accidents

There was 1 accident that was notified to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). The accident was reportable as the employee was 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 2, both employees who were also absent from work for more than three days.

This equates to 13 days absence (6 working days).

Non Employees

There were 25 entries for the period in question of which 17 were at the Meadowside Centre and 5 were in the Guildhall. Of the 17 accident book entries at the Meadowside Centre, 15 were sport related injuries.

The number of entries for the previous 12 months was 40 of which 27 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. A breakdown of the figures for 2005/6 can be provided if required.

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 4 recorded incidents involving parking attendants. The corresponding figures for 2005/6 were 19 and 6 respectively.

Occupational ill health

There were 15 referrals to the Council's occupational health advisor. This compares with 18 for 2004/5.

Safety related training

During the period April 1st 2005 and March 31st 2006 the following safety training courses / briefings were organised with approximate attendance:

- Corporate induction training – 4 health and safety modules (80 attendees).
- Manual handling – 4 half day courses (30 attendees).
- Asbestos awareness – 2 half day briefings for staff and contractors (175 attendees).
- Breakaway training (dealing with aggressive customers) – 1 day course for front line staff (20 attendees).
- Coping at the sharp end (managing aggression) – Two one day courses for frontline staff (32 attendees).
- Briefing for office support staff on manual handling and post room security (6 attendees).
- Health and safety responsibilities, a briefing for directors and senior managers (30 attendees).
- Practical guide to carrying out an ergonomic workstation assessment – 1 day course for display screen equipment assessment co-ordinators (6 attendees).
- Briefing for trainee Winchester Area Tourist Guide Association guides on risk assessment and event planning (20 attendees).
- The safe handling and use of compressed gas cylinders – Half day course for enforcement officers and building maintenance client officers (10 attendees).
- Working at height / construction safety legislation overview – 1 day course for building maintenance surveyors and client officers (15 attendees).

Accident trends

As highlighted in the 2004/5 report, nationally, slips, trips and falls are the biggest cause of absence due to physical injury followed by 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 accidents, both reportable and minor remains very low and accident causation tends to mirror the national picture with slips, trips and falls being the primary cause. Overall, the total number of recorded accidents to employees and members of the public has decreased.

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. The number of working days lost due to accidents remains very low.

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 incidence of verbal abuse / threats has remained at a similar level to 2004/5.

Benchmarking

As highlighted in the information report for 2004/5, there has not been any local benchmarking of corporate health and safety performance and the Hampshire Safety Officers' Group had set up a working party to review benchmarking for the occupational health, safety and welfare advisory service in conjunction with South East Employers.

However, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has since circulated a draft local authority benchmarking questionnaire to the Local Government Safety Forum. A trial questionnaire was subsequently drawn up incorporating the HSE's question set and is currently being trialled by the local authorities in Hampshire.

Review of Action Plan 2005/6

Stress Management

Aim – See Action Plan 2004/5.

A stress management policy and guidance was drawn up in 2004/5 and the monitoring of stress related sickness absence was instigated by the Human Resources Directorate.

A staff stress questionnaire was to have been issued to all staff in July 2005 which was to provide a benchmark for future staff surveys. The question set has subsequently been revised so that the results can be analysed using the Health and Safety Executive's assessment software and should be issued within the next two months.

Lead Officer – Principal Human Resources Advisor

Input from Health & Safety Adviser / Training & Development Advisor.

Revised completion date – October 2006.

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'.

Winchester City Council was audited in November 2005 and the report identified a number of areas where performance was known to be inconsistent and an action plan has subsequently been drawn up to improve safety management in these areas.

Legionella

Aim – See Action Plan 2005/6.

Although there are no high risk sites and control measures are in place, a written management strategy is required. Unfortunately, due to changes in personnel this has not been progressed. However, the new Building Services Manager has been recently appointed and will be starting in late June early July.

Lead Officer – Chief Estates Officer

Input from Building Services Manager / Health & Safety Advisor
Revised completion date – October 2006

Roles and Responsibilities

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

Revised completion date – September 2006

This was highlighted in the aforementioned Inter Authority Audit and is being progressed. Amended appraisal forms have been drafted to include health and safety performance where there is a specific role within the directorate or division.

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 Advisor

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)

A tree management strategy has been drawn and a prioritised inspection regime instigated.

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

Revised completion date – January 2007.

The major revision of these regulations has been postponed. The regulations will now cover all construction work and the revised date for publication is October 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

Plans have been drawn up to improve fire safety in the building and a start date for the work to be carried out is awaited.

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 & Development Advisor

Revised completion date – October 2006

The Training Officer resigned in August 2005 and the post could not be filled until March 2006. Consequently, this initiative was not progressed.

HEALTH & SAFETY ACTION PLAN 2006/7

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 are 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.

It will be noted from the 2005/6 review that a number of initiatives were not progressed or completed during the proposed time frame due to a combination of maternity leave and resignations and the completion dates have been revised accordingly.

Training

As in previous years, 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.

Specific Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Issues

Fire Safety

Aim -

In addition to the aforementioned initiatives that are ongoing or subject to revised completion dates, the principle change in legislation will be the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order which is due to be enacted in October 2006. This will replace all existing fire safety legislation and will introduce risk based fire safety assessments and premises risk management plans and includes all premises to which the public has access.

Lead Officers – Various

Input from Building Control / Specialist Consultant / Health & Safety Advisor

Staff Consultation

Aim -

This was identified in the Inter Authority Audit. Due to a number of factors, the Unison Safety Committee has met on an infrequent basis, there being no formal staff consultation process in place.

It is proposed, with the agreement of Unison, to extend the membership of the Safety Committee to include officers from each Directorate / Division and the Committee will be chaired by the Director of Human Resources.

Lead Officer – Director of Human Resources

Input from Health & Safety Advisor / Unison / Risk & Insurance Officer

Completion date September 2006

Contract Management

Aim -

Identified in the Inter Authority Audit, contract monitoring has not been consistent in terms of both frequency and record keeping, a weakness also identified by the Council's insurers.

A more robust and consistent approach is required from both an enforcement and insurance standpoint.

Lead Officer – Various Client Officers

Input from Health & Safety Advisor / Risk & Insurance Officer

Completion date November 2006

Home / Distance Working

Aim -

Home working, in various formats, is to be extended in order to reduce office space as part of the proposed office rebuilding / development programme. There are a number of health, safety and welfare issues that will need to be resolved.

Lead Officer – Director of Human Resources

Input from Health & Safety Advisor / Risk & Insurance Officer