

## **CORPORATE HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE**

### **ANNUAL REPORT – 2005/2006**

#### **1.0 Introduction:**

#### **1.1 Corporate/Departmental H&S**

Watford Borough Council has an established Corporate Health & Safety Committee (CH&SC) which meets four times annually. The CH&SC members consist of representatives from each of the 12 services and representatives from UNISON Service/ Departmental Committees have been set up to supplement the CH&SC and they also quarterly. The object of these committees is to consider local safety issues and report back to the CH&SC as necessary,

The constitution and the working rules for the CH&SC can be found in The councils Health & Safety Policy (Appendix 9,pg85)

#### **1.2 Reason for the Report**

Part of the working rules of the CH&SC ( Appendix 9,pg87,para10) states that the Committee will prepare an annual report outlining Health& Safety (H&S) performance and intended action for the coming year. The report/Service profiles will enable the Committee to get an over view of the level of compliance generally throughout the council. Areas of weakness can be identified and the appropriate action taken. Examples of good practice can be highlighted and shared with other services.

#### **1.3 Structure of Report**

It was agreed at the CH&SC that the report should be informative and include accident statistics (broken down by service), a Service Improvement Strategy stating what risk assessments had been carried out, problems identified and overcome and those not actioned. A format for the report and Service Profiles has been approved by the CH&SC (see appendix 1).

#### **2.0 Revitalising Health and Safety**

H&S in any organisation needs to be reassessed from time-to time to take account of organisational/staff changes, changes in legislation, accident/incident information etc. Issues such as these have and do affect the management of H&S at Watford. It is imperative to be constantly vigilant and we should endeavour to find new ways to revitalise H&S and keep it firmly on everyone's agenda.

### **3.0 Health and Safety Policy**

The H&S Policy was last updated June 2005 and hard and electronic versions are accessible.

The key changes in H&S legislation during the period of this report, which affect us, are:

- **Working at Heights Regulations 2005** - The council are required to assess the risks and implement appropriate control measures for ALL work at height.
- **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) order 2005** - The council must carry out suitable and sufficient assessments which now supersede fire certificates.
- **Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005** - The council must take action given certain noise levels and the first level is 80dB. This is a reduction of 5dB's from previous regulations.
- **Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005** - The regulations place a duty on employers to ensure that health risks arising from exposure to vibration are assessed thoroughly.
- **Management of Health and Safety at Work 1999 (Amended) 2006** - Employers have a duty to carryout suitable and sufficient risk assessments.
- **Asbestos Regulations 2006** - The council has a duty to protect their employees, and so far as is reasonably practicable, anyone else (whether or not they are at work) on their premises who may be exposed to asbestos.

The Health and Safety Executive plan to make all future changes to the legislation either in April or October. This should make it easier to keep abreast of new legislation and keep the policy up to date.

### **4.0 Departmental Profiles**

Service Profiles were sent out to all Service Heads for completion by the end of October. To date all have been completed with the exception of: **Housing Maintenance, Revenues and Benefits, ICT and Planning and Development.**

The results of the profiles are shown at appendix 2 and accident figures have been put in for the missing departments from the corporate statistics. This was done to get an overall picture for the year. However other figures shown in the summary will be based on the figures available i.e. minus the missing departments

### **5.0 Summary of Responses**

#### **5.1 Risk Assessments:**

The Management of H&S at Work Regulations 1999 outline the need for Risk Assessments.

Assessments are the measure by which the council are judged by the enforcing authorities i.e. The HSE, Fire Service etc.

It is therefore important that all assessments are up to date and regularly reviewed; this is the key to successful Risk Management. For this report services were only asked to provide a reference list of their risk assessments, so an analysis of their content is not possible. An overview of the responses shows that all services have completed assessments relevant to their activities,

## 5.2 Display Screen Equipment (DSE):

- Off the 607 staff shown 398 are classified as DSE “users” 66%
- The number of staff recorded as having eyesight tests was 80 of the total (13%). In some departments, however, a NIL return is shown. It would be prudent for management to ensure that all staff are offered an eyesight test.
- Of the departments shown in the summary only the Community Centres have not completed their DSE assessments.
- 124 (31%) of the “Users” have received training in the past two years but this figure can be misleading as 6 departments of the 11 shown received no training. These were: Waste Services, L&Dem, Corporate, Finance, Comm. Centres and Leisure Centres.

## 5.3 Manual Handling:

- Services were asked how many of their staff were covered by Manual Handling Assessments 2 ( Env Serv and Leisure Centres) said all Corporate made a Nil return and the rest were somewhere in between. It must be realised that this legislation applies to ALL staff.
- Of a total of 607 staff shown 87 (14%) have received manual handling training in the past 2 years. The departments who have received training are: Env. Services(32), Hsg.exc Maint. (2), Leisure /Comm(48) and Strat Services (5) the rest made a Nil return.

## 5.4 Accidents:

- The reference period shown on the summary was from 01.04.05 to 31.03.06.
- There was a total of 130 accidents/incidents and the majority were made up of: 41 minor cuts/sprains, 23 verbal abuse, 17 slips/trips and 14 back injuries. For a breakdown of all accidents/incidents see Appendix 2.
- Legal and Democratic Services showed a Nil return.
- There were 3 accidents/incidents reports under RIDDOR and they were from Env. Waste (1), Hsg Maint. (1) and Community Centres (1).
- 2003/04 166 accidents, 2004/05 130 accidents and 2005/06 130.

## **5.5** Training:

- Services were asked for numbers of staff who had received DSE, Manual Handling and H&S training.
- DSE – of the 398 designated “Users” shown 124 (31%) had received training in the past 2 years.  
Env. Health. 32, Hsg. Exc. Maint 40, Leisure 13, Strat. Serv. 29 and H.R 10 the rest showed a Nil return.

**5.6** Manual Handling – of the 434 staff identified as staff who have MH duties 87 (20%) had received training in the past 2 years.  
Env.Health 32, Hsg., Leisure/Comm. and Strat Serv. 5 the rest showed a Nil return.

**5.7** H&S Training – Env. Serv., Hsg., Leisure/Comm. and Stat Serv. Carried out specific training i.e. first aid, banks man, fire etc. the rest showed a Nil return. There was limited or no training in actual basis H&S.

## **6.0** The Way Forward

The H&S profile reports, received, show that we are maintaining a level of understanding and commitment. However, there are also signs that we need to increase this commitment to maintain this level of awareness/compliance required by legislation and for us to move forward.

An acceptable norm can only be achieved through a consistent level of understanding and commitment, so that H&S is kept on everyone’s agenda.

There are many areas of good practice, examples of risk assessments, procedures, codes policies etc., which can be shared by all. To move forward it is essential that all staff are adequately to the level appropriate to their needs.

## **7.0** Recommendations:

It is advised that all Heads of service draw up an action plan to:

- Ensure that all risk assessments applicable to their service areas are complete and up to date
- Ensure that H&S training needs are identified for all staff and training dates agreed.
- Ensure that managers are aware of the reporting procedure’s under RIDDOR (reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) and the Council’s accident/incident reporting procedures.
- Ensure all managers have a good understanding of council’s H&S Policy.
- Ensure that UNISON and the Safety Advisor are informed of all future dates for their departmental H&S meetings.