

**CORPORATE HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REPORT – 2006/2007
HEALTH & SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT**

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 a representative from each of the 10 Services and representatives from UNISON.

Service/Departmental Committees are set up to supplement the CH&SC. They also meet four times annually to consider local safety issues and report to the CH&SC.

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

1.2 Reason for Report:

Part of the working rules of the CH&SC (Appendix 9, pg87) 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/support given.

1.3 Structure of the 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. The agreed format for the report and service Profiles now has provision for quarterly reporting.

2.0 Health & Safety Reporting Procedure:

H&S in any organisation needs to be reassessed from time-to- time to take account of organisational/staff changes, legislation, accident/incident information etc.

To ensure that management at all levels are aware of these changes and to keep H&S on everyone's agenda the following reporting procedure has been agreed:

- H&S would be reported quarterly as part of Services Quarterly Review.
- Corporate H&S would be reported at the Quarterly Review by the Chair of the CH&SC
- There would be a quarterly report on H&S to Management Team

- The H&S annual/quarterly reports would go to the Audit Committee
- That all management groups are updated on any new key legislation/regulations/case law.

3.0 Health & Safety Policy:

The current policy is available on the intranet.

There have been some legislative changes during the year e.g. Control of Asbestos 2006

The departments affected by these changes have been informed and the necessary action has been taken.

The existing H&S policy is currently being updated to take account of these changes and a draft will be presented to the CH&SC at their December meeting.

4.0 Departmental Profiles:

Annual Service Profiles (see Appendix 1) for the year 2006/07 were sent out to all Service Heads for completion by the beginning of August.

Returns were made by all departments with the exception of: Finance and BIS.

The results of the profiles are shown at Appendix 2. Accident figures have been put in for missing departments from the accident statistics collected centrally. This was done to get an overall picture for the year. However, other figures shown in the summary are based on the figures available i.e. minus the missing departments.

5.0 Summary of Responses:

Risk Assessments

The Management of H&S at Work Regulations 1999 (amended) 2006 outline the employers' duty to carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments.

Assessments are a measure by which the council are judged by the enforcing authorities i.e. The H&S Executive (HSE).

It is, therefore, imperative that all assessments are up to date and regularly monitored. They should reflect any changes in work activities or legislation and they are 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 the majority of departments have completed and updated their assessments.

Both Planning and Revenues and Benefits showed a NIL return.

Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

- Of the 628 staff shown 415 are classified as DSE "users" (66%)

- The number of staff recorded as having eyesight tests was 38 of the total (9%). In some departments a NIL return was recorded and overall staff receiving eyesight tests has fallen. The council has an obligation to ensure the provision of eye and eyesight tests to all designated users on request.
- Of the departments shown in the summary the following sections showed a NIL return for completing D.S.E assessments: Leisure i.e. Rangers, Community Centres, Parks, Town Hall Leisure and Revenues and Benefits.
- During the year 2006-2007 only 16 staff (4%) received any D.S.E. training and these came from Strategic Services (11) and the Museum (5)

Manual Handling

- Of the 628 staff shown, 299 have been identified as staff covered by a relevant MH risk assessment (48%)
- Of the 299 staff 53 received MH training (18%). Housing (38), Strategic Services (6) and the BECC (9)
- Upper limb disorders still attribute to high percentage of days lost and it would be advantageous for all staff to receive some awareness training on how to minimise back strain.

Accidents

- There was a total of 113 accidents/incidents recorded during the year and they included 15 back injuries, 3 burns/scalds, 39 minor cuts/sprains, 4 eye injuries, 12 head injuries, 6 miscellaneous i.e. fainting, 14 slips/trips, 1 physical abuse, 8 verbal abuse and 11 other. For a breakdown by department see appendix 2.
- There are 2 accident/incident reports under RIDDOR and they were from Env. Waste and Parks.
- The overall numbers of accidents/incidents continue to fall. 2003/2004 166 accidents, 2004/2005 130 accidents, 2005/2006 130 accidents, 2006/2007 113 accidents.

Training

- Services were asked for numbers of staff who had received DSE, Manual Handling and H & S training.
- DSE - of the 415 designated users shown, 16 (4%) had received any training.
- Manual Handling – of the 299 identified, 53 received training (18%)

H & S Training

- There has been a series of H & S Training courses set up for Managers (1/2 day) and staff (1/2 day) by T & D. These have been limited but all courses were well attended (General H&S 87 and H&S for managers 64)

- There has been H & S training for staff during the year of which some specialised i.e. hand/arm vibration and asbestos awareness.

6.0 Key Messages

- The management of the Health & Safety at Work Regulations require employers to carry out Risk Assessments, monitor and update these assessments.
- Risk Assessments are the cornerstone of H & S and the key to accident/incident prevention. Failure to carry out assessments and implement the controls which minimise the risks could result in prosecution.
- It is important that all work activities are Risk Assessed and monitored on a regular basis through Departmental H & S Committees, as they are working documents. Service GMT's are the appropriate forum for monitoring information to be discussed and actioned as appropriate.
- Any further action identified during the assessment process must be completed in the time span given.
- H & S training in general; needs to be re-assessed, for although there were pockets of training overall figures were low e.g. 4% designated users were trained, 18% of staff who carry out manual handling work were trained and it is not known whether other staff have been trained previously.
- There is a requirement under the legislation that all staff should receive H & S training appropriate to their needs and requirements.
- All senior managers, managers and supervisors must be fully aware of their responsibilities under the H & S Regulations.

7.0 Recommendations

It is advised that all Heads of Service ensure that the following is happening in their service:-

- That all risk assessments applicable to their service areas are complete and up to date.
- That all 'further action' identified on the assessments have been actioned.
- That all H&S training needs are identified for all staff and training dates agreed.
- That all their staff are aware of their responsibilities for H & S (See H & S policy)
- That there is a reporting procedure i.e. via their departmental Safety Committees/GMT's.
- That all staff are made aware of the Council's H & S policy and safety procedures.