

Caerphilly County Borough Council

Health and Safety

ANNUAL REPORT 2004 – 2005

1. INTRODUCTION

This report has been produced by the Corporate Health and Safety Unit and is intended to provide a summary of the Authority's health and safety management programme, continuing arrangements, key achievements and performance data for the year April 2004 – April 2005.

The Council

Caerphilly County Borough Council was formed in April 1996 as a result of local government reorganisation in Wales. This resulted in the formation of 22 new Unitary Authorities to deliver all local government services. Caerphilly County Borough Council is the fourth largest authority in Wales and stretches from the Heads of the Valleys in the north to Risca and Caerphilly near the M4 corridor in the south. The County Borough has over 50 distinct towns and villages. The larger settlements include Caerphilly, Blackwood, Newbridge, Bargoed, Ystrad Mynach, Crumlin and Risca. The council provides services for 170,000 people who live in an area covering approximately 28,000 hectares.

Statement of Intent

- Caerphilly County Borough Council recognises its responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act, for ensuring so far as it is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees.
- The Council attaches the greatest importance to health and safety considering this to be a management responsibility ranking equally with other management functions within the organisation.
- It is the policy of the Council to take all reasonably practicable precautions for the prevention of accidents and dangerous occurrences and for the creation of working conditions that safeguard employees. To this end, the Council will allocate the necessary resources and enlist the active support of all employees, upon whom duties are also imposed by the Health and Safety at Work etc Act.
- The Council regards the standards set by the various relevant statutory provisions as the minimum standard that must be achieved, and will endeavour to improve upon these standards where reasonably practicable.
- This statement and the organisation, arrangements and safety rules, which form part of the policy, will be reviewed regularly and modified and updated as necessary.

2 CORPORATE MANAGEMENT

- Overall responsibility for health and safety lies with the Chief Executive as head of paid service.
- The deputy Chief Executive and Directors are responsible for ensuring compliance with legal requirements within their directorates and for ensuring the development of divisional health and safety policies and plans.

- The Director of the Environment has responsibility for the management of all matters relating to the Corporate Health and Safety function which includes championing the function at Corporate Management Team level.
- Managers and Supervisors are responsible for managing the health and safety of their staff on a day-to-day basis.
- Employees have responsibility to take reasonable care of their own health and safety, to co-operate with their manager/supervisor, to report any health and safety concerns/issues and to work in accordance with instructions and all departmental/corporate health and safety policies and procedures.
- It is recognised that the most successful way of managing health and safety within an organisation is to integrate responsibility into the general management system. Directorate Health and Safety Officers support Directors, Managers and Supervisors in ensuring compliance with legislation and with health and safety policies/procedures.
- The Corporate Health and Safety Unit advises on occupational health and safety issues corporately, develops policy, audits performance and supports all Directorates in meeting their legal obligations.
- Occupational health assessments and screening is provided by an external source with an Occupational Health Nurse providing the strategic function.
- The Council recognises that Health and Safety management is an integral part of the overall risk management strategy. The Corporate Risk Manager works closely with Corporate Health and Safety Unit to ensure effective management of health and safety risks. The Risk Manager is also an active member of the Health and Safety liaison group.

Development of Health and Safety Competence

The Authority is committed to ensuring that Managers and Elected Members are given the necessary training to understand and meet their obligations under health and safety law and the Council's health and safety policy. Therefore the following training programme was developed as detailed below: -

Health and Safety for Senior Executives

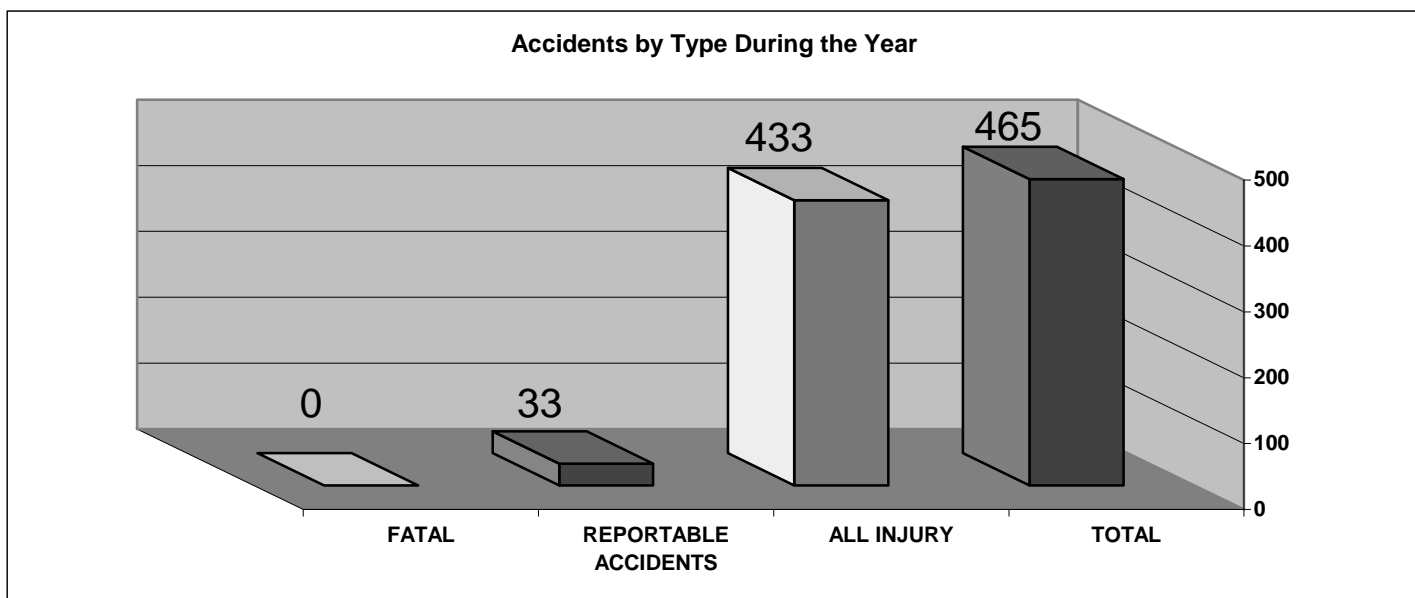
This was a one-day course for Senior Executives of the Council and included Directors and Cabinet Members. Attendance on the courses was compulsory. The course content included:

- Directors, Senior Managers and the Law
- An overview of the legislation
- Developing a positive Health and Safety Culture
- Accident Prevention and Control
- Ensuring Successful Health and Safety Management (HS (G) 65)

Approximately two hundred Managers attended and a further series of courses is planned to ensure that new and promoted Managers receive the appropriate training.

Although Directorate Health and Safety Officers are responsible for the development and organisation of directorate specific health and safety and safety training, the corporate Health and Safety Unit are currently working with Directorate Officers to develop corporate training packages on a variety of topics such as COSHH and Health and Safety Induction.

3 STATISTICAL INFORMATION



With regard to enforcement action the Authority has received the following notices/actions: -

- HSE (Health and Safety Executive) – 2 Advisory letters received requiring follow-up.
- Fire Authority – 1 enforcement notice and 19 advisory letters requiring follow-up.

4. PARTNERSHIPS

The Authority is engaged in the following activities with partner agencies to achieve identified goals/objectives: -

HSE – to plan and co-ordinate responses to issues identified by HSE.

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service – an agreement was made between the Authority and the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service in 2004, which means that instead of issuing formal notices the Fire and Rescue Service, will contact the Corporate Health and Safety Unit. This arrangement allows any issues to be actioned and progressed within a less formal framework and relies on ongoing co-operation and partnership.

WLGA (Welsh Local Government Association) – The Health and Safety Manager represents Caerphilly at the WLGA All Wales Corporate Health and Safety Advisers Forum. The group consists of Local Authority health and safety practitioners from across Wales and aims to promote and share best practise in health and safety.

The Directorate Health and Safety Officers represent the Authority at the WLGA All Wales Education, Social Services and DLO (Direct Labour Organisations) forums. In addition the Social Services Health and Safety Officer and the Occupational Health Nurse attend the WLGA All Wales Manual Handling Sub-group.

Other Groups – The Health and Safety Manager represents Caerphilly at the South and East Wales Safety Advisers Group, which is a forum for Local Safety Advisers to share expertise and best practise.

5. JOINT CONSULTATION

The Authority considers consultation to be an integral part of health and safety management and essential to the promotion of a positive health and safety culture. Consultation on health and safety issues is achieved through the following mechanisms: -

The Corporate Health and Safety Committee

The Corporate Health and Safety Committee is Caerphilly County Borough Council's statutory forum for consultation on Occupational Health and Safety issues. An elected member chairs the committee and membership is made up of elected members, managers, employee representatives and trade union representatives. The committee meets on a quarterly basis although meetings can be arranged more frequently if consultation is required on important health and safety issues. Copies of the minutes of the Corporate Safety Committee go to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee for action. Whilst the Corporate Health and Safety Committee has no decision-making powers, recommendations of the Committee are referred to the appropriate Council committee for appropriate action.

The Health and Safety Liaison Group

This group consists of the Corporate Health and Safety Unit, Directorate Health and Safety Officers, the Occupational Health Nurse, the Risk Manager, and is chaired by the Chief Trading Standards Officer (now Head of Public Protection). The group meets on a monthly basis and provides a forum for exchange of ideas whilst allowing dissemination of information for consultation through the Directorates. The terms of reference and membership of the Health and Safety Liaison Group are currently being reviewed.

The Health and Safety Professionals Group

This group consists of the Corporate Health and Safety Unit, Directorate Health and Safety Officers and the Occupational Health Nurse. This group allows discussion on health and safety issues, the development of cross-directorate procedures and the sharing of best practise across the Authority.

The Healthy Workplaces Group

Caerphilly County Borough Council has a Healthy Workplaces Group that seeks to develop strategies to promote health in the workplace and to give employees the information necessary to enable them to make informed decisions regarding their health.

6. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PROVISION

The Authority is committed to achieving high standards of Occupational Health provision and to participate fully in Government health initiatives such as 'Healthier Workplaces', 'Revitalising Health and Safety', and 'Better Health: Better Wales'.

The Authority was awarded the Silver Standard in the National Assembly's Corporate Health Standard in May 2003 and is committed to achieving the gold standard. Re-assessment against the Corporate Health Standard is expected to take place in March 2006.

The Authority actively participates in health promotion activities such as European Health and Safety Week, Men's Health Day and No Smoking Day.

7. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

During 2004-2005, the Authority commenced a number of health and safety initiatives with the aim of improving overall health and safety performance at Caerphilly County Borough Council. These include: -

1. Completion of the health and safety strategic review. This resulted in the formation of the Corporate Health and Safety Unit in September 2004, with dedicated Health and Safety Officers appointed in each Directorate.
2. Development of the Caerphilly County Borough Council Revitalising Health and Safety Strategy which is the authority's roadmap for improving health and safety performance over the next 5 years.
3. Introduction of a risk prioritised programme of topic based health and safety audits across all Directorate to be conducted by the Corporate Health and Safety Unit.
4. The launch of a health and safety site on the Intranet. The site is a comprehensive health and safety resource for managers, and includes all Corporate Health and Safety Policies and Procedures, news, frequently asked questions, notes of health and safety meeting and links to external health and safety websites.
5. Policy development and review initiative. A gap analysis was conducted to identify areas where Caerphilly County Borough Council needed Corporate Health and Safety policies or where existing policies required review and relaunch. This process has resulted in a number of new policies being approved and will continue over the coming year.

8. MONITORING HEALTH AND SAFETY PERFORMANCE

The Authority undertakes a comprehensive monitoring exercise to ensure that premises and activities are monitored in accordance with HSG 65 'Successful Health and Safety Management.' The monitoring is undertaken in a variety of ways as detailed below.

- The Corporate Health and Safety Committee monitors health and safety performance through reviewing divisional audits carried out by the Corporate Health and Safety Unit. This allows the Committee to identify problem areas and target weaknesses.
- The Corporate Health and Safety Committee also monitors health and safety performance through reviewing accident incident statistics and accident investigation details on a quarterly basis.
- The Corporate Health and Safety Unit undertake a risk prioritised, topic based health and safety auditing programme to ensure high standard of health and safety in Council owned premises and carried out 145 audits between April 2004 – April 2005.
- The Corporate Health and Safety Unit submits reports to the Corporate Health and Safety Committee for consultation. These reports are then presented to the appropriate Council Committee allowing effective monitoring of health and safety performance and the report to be actioned as appropriate.

9. CONCLUSION AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Significant developments have taken place over the past year in formulating policies and procedures that reflect current legislation, standards and best practise. Over the next year it is hoped to build on this progress.

2004-2005 saw the completion of the health and safety strategic review. This resulted in the formation of the Corporate Health and Safety Unit, with dedicated Directorate Health and Safety Officers appointed to support health and safety management across all Directorates. The Authority has developed a Revitalising Health and Safety Strategy, which is the Authorities roadmap for long-term improvement of health and standards. This is supported by a 5 year action plan and an annual health and safety plan, which allows the Authority to risk prioritise health and safety needs and focus resources where needed to best meet the requirements set out in the Governments Revitalising Health and Safety Agenda. It is anticipated that the new structure and renewed commitment to health and safety will move us towards our aim of becoming an exemplar of health and safety practise.