

Caerphilly County Borough Council

Corporate Health and Safety

ANNUAL REPORT 2005 – 2006

1. INTRODUCTION

This annual report is the third since the inception of the Corporate Health and Safety Unit in 2004 and is intended to provide a summary of the Authority's health and safety management programme, continuing arrangements, key achievements and performance for the year April 2005 – April 2006.

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. The number of council employees for 2005/2006 was approximately 8,600.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

- Caerphilly County Borough Council recognises its responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, 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 Council policy 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 1974.
- The Council has regard to 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 and become an exemplar of health and safety performance 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

- Ultimate responsibility for health and safety issues 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 effective implementation of the Authorities health and safety policies and procedures within their directorates.
- 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 provides the strategic framework for the Authority and 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 a mix of external and internal provision. The Authority employs an Occupational Health Manager who provides the strategic occupational health function and a Backcare Adviser to introduce and implement the All Wales Manual Handling Passport and provide competent advice and support on manual handling issues across the Authority.
- 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, employees 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.

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

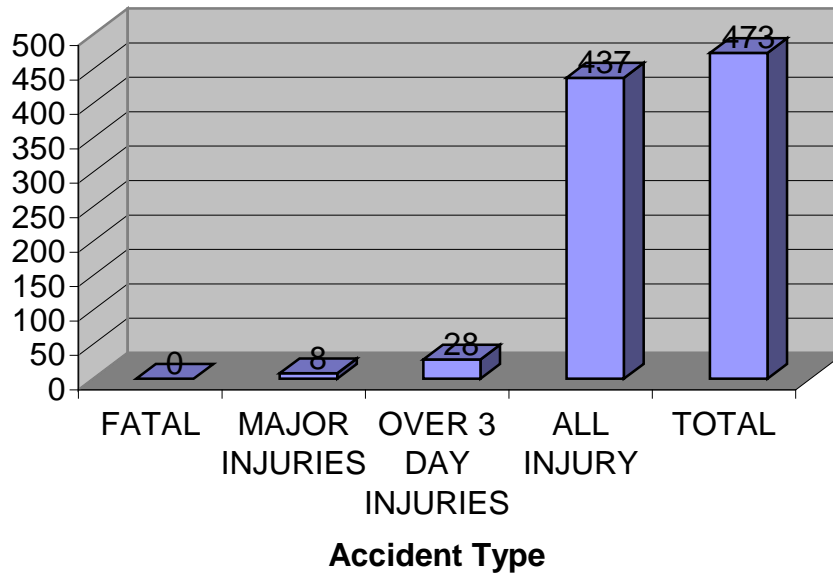
Over the past 12 months the Corporate Health and Safety Unit has developed a corporate health and safety induction training package, this is deliver by members of the CHSU as part of the corporate welcome event. The Corporate Health and Safety Unit has recently commenced policy briefings for Managers giving them an overview of any new policies and the knowledge to implement the policies in their service area, this will be ongoing as new policies are approved.

The appointment of a Health and Safety trainer has recently been agreed. The trainer will develop and deliver key training packages starting with Building Managers training. Health and Safety training remains a key priority for 2006/2007.

3 STATISTICAL INFORMATION

The graph below show the total number of work related accidents that have occurred to employees within the Authority for 2005/2006.

Accident by Type during the Year



The Authority collects two performance indicators (PI) with regards to accidents, these are:

- (1) The number of work related major injuries to the Authorities employees per 1,000.
- (2) The number of work related accidents, which result in an employees being absent from work for more than three days, per 1,000 employees.

The Performance Indicators for 2005/2006 were:

- (1) Major injury rate of 0.933 per 1,000 employees
- (2) Over 3 day accident rate of 3.38 per 1,000 employees

The accident statistics for 2005/2006 show an increase in the number of major injuries on previous years. There have been discussions as to the reasons for this increase and it is felt that some of the increase could be attributed to an increased awareness of polices and procedures and improved management of health and safety including improvements in accident reporting across the Authority. All major accidents are investigated to establish a root cause and determine action necessary to prevent reoccurrence.

The majority of accidents/incidents were minor in nature and consisted predominantly of manual handling and slip/trip/fall occurrences. The number of manual handling accidents/incidents across the Authority remains significant and the Authority is committed to reducing this figure without compromising on service delivery. As a result the Authority has employed a Backcare Adviser to introduce and implement the All Wales Manual Handling Passport as the standard for Manual Handling compliance across the Authority.

It is recognised that all accidents regardless of their severity have a cost implication for the Authority. As a result accident reporting and investigation will remain a key priority for 2006/2007. Planned action to progress this issue will include a review of the policy, introduction of a new system for recording accidents/incidents, and a review of arrangements for investigation and monitoring.

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 – No enforcement notices and no 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 Occupational Health Manager represents the Authority at the WLGA All Wales Occupational Health Forum and the Backcare Adviser attend the WLGA All Wales Manual Handling Sub-group.

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:

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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, health and safety officers 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 Health and 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 CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY GROUP

This group consists of the Corporate Health and Safety Unit, Senior Directorate Health and Safety Officers, the Occupational Health Manager, the Risk Manager, the Emergency Planning Manager, a representative from Property Services plus Senior Management representatives from all Directorates and is chaired by the 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 Corporate Health and Safety Unit and the Directorate Health and Safety Officers are actively involved in this group.

THE HEALTH AND SAFETY PROFESSIONALS GROUP

This group consists of the Corporate Health and Safety Unit, Directorate Health and Safety Officers, the Occupational Health Manager and the Backcare Adviser. 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. This group is working towards re-assessment for the Corporate Health Standard.

DIRECT UNION CONSULTATION

All Health and Safety Policies are subject to direct union consultation. The Corporate Health and Safety Unit (and where appropriate Directorate Health and Safety Officers) meet with nominated Union Representatives to ensure that the Union views are reflected and the policies receive Union endorsement.

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 revised Corporate Health Standard is expected to take place before the end of 2006. The Healthy Workplaces group are leading on ensuring the Authority is prepared for the re-assessment.

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 2005-2006, 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. Continued policy development and implementation. New policies approved during 2005/2006 included Contractor Selection, Management and Monitoring, Display Screen Equipment, Lone Working, Risk Assessment and the Corporate Health and Safety Policy. Policies currently being developed/revised include Working from Home, Asbestos Management and Young Persons and Work Experience, Mobile Phones and Driving and Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH).
2. Development of health and safety policy briefings. It was highlighted by Managers that they required support on understanding their responsibilities specified within new health and safety policies. As a result the Corporate Health and Safety Unit has developed brief presentations on Managers responsibilities. Initial briefings will cover Lone Working, Display Screen Equipment and Contractor Selection, Management and Monitoring, further briefing sessions will be developed to support new policy introductions.
3. Health and Safety audits - 214 audits were carried out during 2005/2006. The audits have been used to identify shortcomings in health and safety arrangements and to review and improve processes. Quarterly reports are submitted to Directorate Management Teams on audits undertaken and action plans outstanding following audits. As a result of asbestos audits carried out in early 2005 the asbestos policy has been revised, new guidance provided to support the policy and training planned for building managers. Following fire safety audits, the Authority reviewed the way in which fire risk assessments were carried out, this resulted in CMT allocating budget to engage a specialist fire safety consultant to carry out fire risk assessments to a consistent standard across the Authority. Procedures are constantly reviewed and refined and following Managers comments on the audit procedure, the procedure was revised and reissued.
4. Introduction of a consistent approach to manage the risks associated with glazing across the Authority. Following discussions at Health and Safety Liaison Group a standard approach was adopted to assess and manage the risk associated with workplace glazing. Allocation of funding from CMT allowing Property Services to engage a contractor who is in the process of carrying out glazing surveys. This allows workplace glazing to be filmed or otherwise managed.

5. Review of the Council's Corporate Violence at Work Database (currently known as Incheck). Work is currently underway to review the Violence at Work Policy, the database and supporting guidance.
6. Recruitment of a Backcare Adviser based in the Occupational Health Department on to work as part of the Occupational health team by supporting Managers in the reduction of musculoskeletal disorders, supporting Managers in managing sickness absence due to musculoskeletal disorders and leading on the introduction and implementation of the All Wales Manual Handling Passport.

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 directorate 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 214 audits between April 2005 – April 2006.
- The Corporate Health and Safety Unit and Directorate Health and Safety Officers submit 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 ensuring the authority has in place a robust health and safety framework.

2005-2006 was a period of change for the Corporate Health and Safety Unit with staff turnover and maternity leave. The Corporate Health and Safety Unit has in place an ambitious service improvement plan for 2006/2007 and will be working on a number of projects which will significantly impact on health and safety standards across the Authority. These include:

- Delivery of mandatory Building Managers training and development of supporting Building Managers handbook.
- Introduction of a new accident reporting/occupational health system.
- Review of the way in which the Authority reports and investigates accidents/incidents.
- Development of database of generic risk assessments as a tool to assist managers in completing and reviewing their risk assessments.
- Development and launch of key health and safety policies including – noise at work, management of occupational road risk and COSHH.
- Development and delivery of management policy briefings to support managers in understanding and implementing new health and safety policies.
- Development of a health and safety induction handbook to support the existing corporate health and safety induction.

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.