

Caerphilly County Borough Council

Corporate Health and Safety

**ANNUAL REPORT 2006 – 2007**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This annual report is the fourth 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 2006 – April 2007.

### **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 2006/2007 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 Authority's 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 workplace health and safety issues corporately, develops policy, audits performance and supports all Directorates in meeting their legal obligations.
- Statutory health screening and screening required under corporate health and safety policies are carried out by a mix of external and internal provision. The Authority employs an Occupational Health Manager who provides the strategic occupational health function and is supported by an Occupational Health Screening Nurse and a Backcare Adviser who delivers a comprehensive and ongoing programme for the treatment and prevention of work related back and musculoskeletal disorders.
- 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 Corporate Health and Safety Group.
- The Corporate Management Team made £500,000 available to address corporate health and safety issues in 2006/07. The budget was agreed by the Corporate Health and Safety Group and CMT as set out below: -

Fire risk assessments (Property)	£100K
Back Advisor	£35K
Corporate Training	£25K
Manual Handling	£340K
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£500K</b>

## **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 over the past 12 months have worked with Directorate Health and Safety Officers to develop corporate training packages on a variety of topics such as Risk Assessment, Manual Handling and Asbestos.

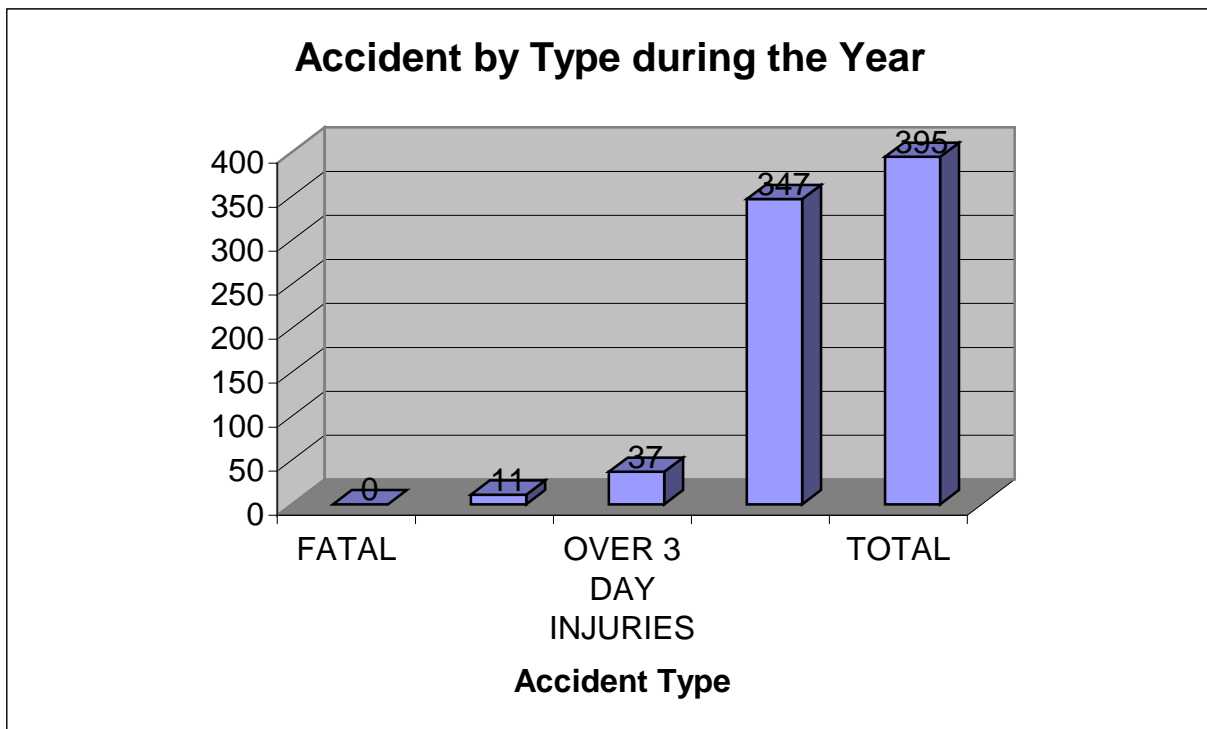
Over the past 12 months the Corporate Health and Safety Unit has developed a corporate Building Managers health and safety package. This ensure that those with building management responsibilities have core competence around issues such as asbestos, legionella, fire safety, glazing, electrical safety etc. The training package is delivered by the Corporate Health and Safety Trainer and to date 17 courses have taken place and 132 employees have been trained.

The Corporate Health and Safety Unit also develops and delivers policy briefings for Managers giving them an overview of any new policies and the knowledge to implement the policies in their service area. In 2006/2007 policy briefings were developed and delivered on Display Screen Equipment, Lone Working, Contractor Management, Violence at Work, Mobile Phones and Driving, Homeworking and COSHH. 420 Managers attended these sessions. This will be ongoing as new policies are approved and where existing policies undergo significant revision.

Health and Safety training remains a key priority for 2007/2008 with the delivery of front line Asbestos Awareness training, Accident Investigation training and Middle Managers' health and safety training the priorities.

### **3 STATISTICAL INFORMATION**

The graph below show the total number of work related accidents that have occurred to employees within the Authority for 2006/2007.



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 2006/2007 were:

- (1) Major injury rate of 1.15 per 1,000 employees
- (2) Over 3 day accident rate of 6.39 per 1,000 employees

The accident statistics for 2006/2007 show that there has been a decrease in the total number of accidents but an increase in the number of major injuries and the number of over 3 day accidents. This is possibly due to improved information on health and safety and employees being more aware of their obligation to report all accidents. It is essential that Managers with the help of Health and Safety Officers where appropriate, investigate work related accidents, address any remedial actions and work towards developing clear processes to manage health and safety risks.

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 2007/2008. 2006/07 saw the introduction of a new system for reporting accidents/incidents. Planned action to further progress this issue will include the introduction of a new policy, detailed guidance on accident investigations and accident investigation training. A review of the statistical information provided to Managers and Members is also planned and will seek to ensure statistical information on health and safety trends is provided quickly in an easy to understand format. This will allow Managers and Health and Safety Officers to ensure trends are identified and early interventions introduced to tackle health and safety issues at an early stage.

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

- HSE (Health and Safety Executive): -
  - An Improvement Notice regarding the development of route risk assessments for refuse/recycling.
  - An advisory letter regarding improvement to school transport management.
  - A prohibition notice regarding Working at Height at Cefn Fforest Leisure Centre.
  - An advisory letter requirement improvements to arrangements for managing Contractors
  - An improvement notice regarding the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of contractors providing transport to and from educational premises.
- Fire Authority – No enforcement notices and no advisory letters requiring follow-up.

Although there has been an increase in the HSE's enforcement action against the Authority this needs to be seen in the context of the HSE's enforcement approach. The HSE is increasingly using enforcement action as a tool to secure improvements in health and safety standards where as they would previously have offered advice only.

#### **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 practice 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 Health and Safety Manager 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: -

#### **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 constitution and membership of the Corporate Health and Safety Committee was reviewed in 2006/07.

#### **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 practice across the Authority.

## **THE HEALTH AT WORK GROUP**

Caerphilly County Borough Council has a Health at Work 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 was rebranded in 2006/07 and was previously known as the Healthy Workplaces Group. The group is committed to improving health promotion in the workplace and is currently 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 at the start of 2008. The Health at Work 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 2006-2007, 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 2006/2007 included Working from Home, Asbestos Management, Mobile Phones and Driving and Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH). Policies currently being developed/revised include Accident Reporting and Investigation, Contractor Management, Vibration at Work and Noise.

2. Development and delivery 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 develops and delivers brief presentations on Managers responsibilities for any new policy, which is approved.
3. Health and Safety audits – 209 audits were carried out during 2006/2007. 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. In addition quarterly reports on audits are submitted to the Corporate Health and Safety Committee. Audit findings are used to identify key issues requiring action and ensures the Authority has a Health and Safety Management System based on the HSE's HSG65 'Managing Health and Safety' guidance. Procedures are constantly reviewed and refined ensuring that all parties work together to improve health and safety standards across the Authority.
4. The Corporate Health and Safety Unit took over lead responsibility for compliance with the Manual Handling Operations Regulations and compliance with the All Wales Manual Handling Passport. This included supporting the delivery of manual handling training, development of a Manual Handling Policy and supporting documentation (forms, FAQ's, guidance, implementation plan), management of the 2 contracts for provision of manual handling training, co-ordination of the Manual Handling Sub-Group and preparation for the planned HSE inspection on Manual Handling.
5. Recruitment of a Corporate Health and Safety Trainer based in the Corporate Health and Safety Unit. The trainer took up post in October 2006 and in addition to delivering Building Managers training is working to develop corporate training courses on risk assessment, accident investigation, manual handling, COSHH etc. The aim is to ensure that all core Health and Safety Training provided across the Authority is to a consistent standard.
6. Developing and delivering Building Managers' training and a supporting Building Managers' handbook. This allow Building Managers to develop a core expertise regarding their premises related responsibilities, provides them with an easily accessible source of information and ensures there is a single location for the maintenance of building related records e.g. PAT testing records, lift maintenance inspections.

## **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 209 audits between April 2006 – April 2007. Quarterly reports are submitted to the Directors allowing monitoring of health and safety performance by



Directorate Management Teams. In addition Directorate Health and Safety Officers carry out audits and inspections within their respective Directorates.

- 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 planned to build on this progress ensuring the authority has in place a robust health and safety framework.

2006-2007 saw significant staff turnover meaning the Corporate Health and Safety Unit was one Officer down for 7 months. It is hoped that the Corporate Health and Safety Unit will be fully staffed in 2007/08 and will develop and sustain a level of expertise and experience which will allow us to improve and progress health and safety standards across the Authority. The Corporate Health and Safety Unit has in place an ambitious service improvement plan for 2007/2008 and will be working on a number of projects which will significantly improve health and safety standards across the Authority. These include:

- Delivery of Middle Managers' health and safety training.
- Introduction of Health and Safety for Senior Managers
- Delivery of Asbestos Awareness Training for all front-line employees
- Delivery of Asbestos Awareness training to support the provision of information leaflets to council tenants on the presence of asbestos in council houses.
- Introduction of Asbestos Management Plans to set out how the Authority will manage asbestos across all CCBC owned and occupied premises.
- Ongoing delivery of mandatory Building Managers training
- Introduction of a new accident reporting and investigation policy with associated training and management briefing sessions.
- 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, vibration at work, occupational road risk, revised contractor management policy.
- Review of existing health and safety policies including lone working, risk assessment, display screen equipment, corporate health and safety policy.
- 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.

During 2007/08 it is also anticipated that the Corporate Health and Safety Unit will transfer from Public Protection to the Personnel Division. This fits into the Corporate Objective of providing all corporate services from the corporate centre. It is anticipated this will afford us the opportunity to review progress to date and set new targets to secure further improvements in health and safety performance. 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 practice.