

**CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
- 11TH FEBRUARY 2009**

SUBJECT: RECENT HSE UPDATES

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of recent updates in Health and Safety information, advice and guidance.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 From 1st April 2009 the 'Gas Safe Register™' will be the new name and the official stamp for gas safety in Great Britain, and will replace the current 'CORGI' gas register. All persons that install, service or maintain gas appliances and pipework in domestic and workplace premises (excluding factories and mines) that must currently be registered with CORGI must register with Capita (the new provider of the gas installer registration scheme) before 1st April 2009. The new brand will be held by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) on behalf of gas installers, and will be used by Capita for the duration of their contract, and will be available to whoever runs the registration scheme in the future. Capita have launched a new logo for the brand, shown below:



The logo, and details of the change from CORGI's legal register to the new Gas Safe register will be very widely advertised in the next few months to alert consumers to the new brand and to ensure gas engineers they appoint are legally registered. This should be brought to the attention of all Building Managers and those responsible for the appointment of gas engineers on behalf of the Authority for domestic housing.

- 2.2 Tower Hamlets London Borough Council was fined £15,000 and ordered to pay costs of £39,089 at the City of London Magistrates' Court last month, after a worker of a contractor received severe burns when he hit a live 132Kv electrical cable while attempting to install a lamppost on the footpath. The HSE investigation showed that Tower Hamlets Council and the contractor (that was also separately prosecuted) had failed to provide the worker with a copy of service plans which would have identified underground electrical cables and did not supervise the work that was being undertaken. The case highlights the importance of ensuring relevant health and safety information is passed on to appointed contractors and the need to supervise their work.

- 2.3 The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is warning health and social care providers to ensure that they carry out suitable risk assessments to determine the safety of equipment used in everyday tasks. The warning follows the prosecution of a local authority after a 90-year-old Service User of a day centre fell from the back of a vehicle operated by Staffordshire County Council while sat in a wheelchair. She suffered internal injuries and died 3 days later in hospital.
- 2.4 The HSE's investigation found that the wheelchair used at the time of the incident had defective brakes and there were no footrests fitted. The wheelchair footrests were lost several years ago yet, despite their absence, the wheelchair continued to be used daily to transport Service Users. No daily or weekly checks were carried out on this wheelchair as a matter of routine, and no system was in place to audit that procedures were in place for the necessary checks on the wheelchairs used in its vehicles to convey Service Users. Combinations of tyre wear from several years' use, poor adjustment of brakes and lack of footrests all contributed to the incident. Staffordshire County Council was fined a total of £83,000 and ordered to pay costs of £21,000 at Stafford Crown Court, on 12th December 2008, after pleading guilty at an earlier Magistrates' hearing on 31st July to breaching section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That the contents of the report be noted.

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Councillor Allan Pritchard, Cabinet Member for Human Resources and Constitutional Affairs
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