



CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN, ON MONDAY, 17TH FEBRUARY 2014 AT 10.00 AM

PRESENT:

Councillor D. Havard - Chairman

Councillors:

A. Higgs.

Together with:

D. Jones (Service Manager, Health, Safety and Welfare), D. Perkins (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), G. Hardacre (Head of HR and Organisational Development), T. Phillips (Health and Safety Manager), R. Phillips (Asbestos Team Manager), S. Hawkins (Community Leisure Officer), A. Wigley (Health and Safety Officer), T. White (Waste Strategy and Operations Manager), S.M. Kauczok (Committee Services Officer).

Trade Union Representatives:

N. Funnell (GMB) and J.A. Roberts-Garcia (UNISON).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors P.J. Bevan, Mrs C. Forehead and S. Kent; Mr S. Brassinne (UCATT), D. Andrew Williams (UNITE) and Mr M.S. Williams (Head of Community and Leisure).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the beginning or during the course of the meeting.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Corporate Health and Safety Committee held on 11th November 2013 (minute nos. 1 - 7; page nos. 1 - 3), be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

4. RAMIS4SCHOOLS MODULE

The Committee received a demonstration of the RAMIS4Schools Module from Donna Jones and Andrew Wigley. The module allows schools to access guidance on all aspects of school's health and safety requirements and all corporate health and safety policies. It allows schools to record an accident via the system including the uploading of all supporting documents, photographs, investigations etc. Any accidents recorded on the system automatically notify the Health and Safety Division. Users of the system are able to download generic risk assessments and risk assessment templates in addition to allowing the user to upload their risk assessments to centrally store and manage the assessments. The module also allows the Health and Safety Division to communicate bulletins and messages to all users of the system via tickertape. The cost for each school to subscribe to the module is £276.

The RAMIS4Schools module will be continually developed with further topics being added with improved functionality. Officers have received very positive feedback from schools on the system and Phase 2 is currently being developed with a planned roll out date of June 2014.

Members complimented officers on the work carried out with schools with regard to the development and implementation of the RAMIS4Schools module and queried whether school governors would have access to it. Officers agreed that it could be useful for school governors to be able to access the information particularly during the pre inspection period.

The Corporate Health and Safety Committee noted the report.

5. EDUCATION HEALTH AND SAFETY WORKS PROGRAMME UPDATE

Terry Phillips, Health and Safety Manager, outlined the recent work and developments undertaken by Health and Safety Officers with maintained Caerphilly schools and education premises during 2013 to 2014.

The Authority has 87 maintained schools and 2 PFI schools where it has statutory responsibilities for health and safety. The Health and Safety Section has developed a Service Level Agreement (SLA), which allows the schools to sign up to receive health and safety support. Each school can take up to 5 days of SLA support. Three days per year must be allocated to cover the Local Authority's delegated duties in terms of a general site inspection or health and safety management audit and a fire inspection. The remaining hours can be requested by the school for school specific health and safety audits, inspections, training sessions and access to the recently developed Ramis4Schools information data base.

It was noted that 45% of general inspections had been completed in schools. These inspections cover site security, housekeeping, traffic segregation, storage issues, playground equipment, fire escapes etc. Once the inspection is published it is uploaded onto the RAMIS live database. Schools are expected to implement remedial actions to rectify any non-compliances raised. Inspections are on a rolling programme and schools are inspected every two years.

The Health and Safety Section also undertakes a programme of fire risk assessments in schools in compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The main findings of the fire inspections have been the omission of basic on site staff training providing awareness of fire exits, routes, emergency procedures and external assembly points. Storage is also a huge issue in schools.

Radiation audits have also been undertaken in all secondary schools that hold radiation sources for delivery of A' level Physics. A mixed picture was uncovered among the schools involved. The most concerning issue was a school's failure to have a standard operating procedure in place for staff who handled radioactive sources. In general however, the physical control and safe storage of the material on site was of an acceptable standard. A one off training session will be funded and arranged via the Authority for heads of science departments in May 2014 to raise awareness of good working practices.

Health and Safety staff have also provided training and support to schools Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCO's) and a total of 67 schools have a SENCO who has received this training which has provided them with the skills to undertake pupil risk assessments and involve relevant specialist officers where required. Seventy eight school employees received asbestos awareness training between May and June 2013. In order to assist school bursars/business managers to carry out their duties, a NEBOSH Health and Safety Certificate course was run via Health and Safety between October and December 2013. A total of 11 staff participated in the qualification. The Health and Safety Section also provides annual Health and Safety Management refresher training for head teachers and a total of 28 attended the course held over 3 sessions during November and December 2013. Similar training was provided for school governors from various schools within the Authority during October and November. In addition, 14 caretakers received on site health and safety advice and training during 2013 covering general health and safety issues as well as specific Legionella training.

The Chair thanked the Officer for the very informative presentation and a full discussion ensued. Arising from issues raised during the course of the debate, Members were advised that appropriate health and safety training and guidance is provided for school caretakers in schools who as well as being vulnerable as lone workers may also have reduced ability to undertake some of the more physical tasks as they get older.

In terms of the main findings of fire inspections revealing the omission of basic on site staff training, Members were advised that the Section runs sessions annually on fire safety awareness and disaster evacuation plans are being rolled out in the next few months. Additional support is provided for schools where necessary and it is the responsibility of the head teacher to ensure that new members of staff are made aware of the location of fire points etc. When Officers visited schools to provide training on the RAMIS module, it was explained what was required in terms of fire safety training and the importance of scheduling fire evacuation practices. Fire safety training and fire evacuation exercises have to be uploaded to RAMIS. If this doesn't happen the Headteacher/Nominated Officer is sent regular email notifications until this action is closed out and evidence provided.

The Corporate Health and Safety Committee noted the report.

6. GENERAL HEALTH, SAFETY AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH UPDATE

Donna Jones provided an update on Health, Safety and Occupational Health issues and investigations since the last meeting of the Committee.

At the start of the year some very productive sessions had been held with Building Managers on the Corporate Asbestos Management Plan (CAMP). Managers were informed of the arrangements for asbestos surveys, undertaking work on Council premises and what to do in the event of an emergency. Further sessions are planned specifically for schools after half term to which school governors would be invited. In addition a specific Domestic Asbestos Management Plan (DAMP) has been developed and will be offered to relevant Housing staff to advise on the arrangements to reduce the risk from asbestos in domestic dwellings owned by the Authority.

The Committee received an update on the Specsavers Scheme, which was launched in November 2012. Following concerns raised at the last meeting about the number of unclaimed vouchers and the cost to the Authority, Officers had met with Specsavers who have now implemented an electronic system (e-voucher) for issue to the employee. If an employee does not use their voucher within 3 months, the voucher will be cancelled and re-issued to another member of staff. This method will ensure that the Authority does not pay for any unused vouchers.

The Health and Safety Division has been working with Parks Services since July 2013 to review all their risk assessments and safe systems of work to ensure their effectiveness. A copy of the employee health and safety handbook, which has been produced was circulated around the table. The handbook, which highlights key risks and controls for employees in Parks Services, has been issued to all Parks staff with the risk assessments and safe systems of work available at the Park depots. Handbooks have also produced for school caretakers and refuse and cleansing staff and there were plans to provide similar for Housing and Highways employees.

The Committee received details of a Road Traffic Accident involving a refuse and cleansing employee in December 2013. The employee had now returned to light duties on a phased basis.

The Health and Safety Executive was due to re-visit the Authority on 10th February to review the improvements that the Authority has made in terms of protecting employees from the effects of working with vibratory tools. Significant work has been undertaken by Health and Safety staff and Occupational Health to address the risk from this health issue and the H&SE supports the Authority's position on redeployment for those staff who can no longer work with these tools. It was noted that a health screening of caretakers had revealed 4 cases of this condition. An update on the outcome of the Health and Safety visit would be provided at the next meeting of the Committee in June.

The Corporate Health and Safety Committee noted the report.

7. INFORMATION ITEMS

The following reports were received and noted:

1. Accident Statistics Report for Quarter 3 - October - December 2013.
2. Recent HSE Updates.

The meeting closed at 11.30 am.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 16th June 2014, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN