



CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE – 21ST NOVEMBER 2016

SUBJECT: CONTROL OF HAND ARM VIBRATION AT WORK POLICY

REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Committee Members approval for the draft policy and corporate management arrangements for the control of Hand Arm Vibration prior to the report being referred to Cabinet for consideration.

2. BACKGROUND

In 2012 a report to CMT advised of the range of issues associated with exposure to Hand Arm Vibration. At that time improvements were required in the employment screening, risk assessment and vibration exposure monitoring processes within service areas. In addition health surveillance which had previously been contracted out was in need of review and improvement. Since 2012 improvements have been made in all areas of vibration control and at the end of the improvement programme a Hand Arm Vibration Policy and Corporate Management Arrangements have been drafted by Health and Safety which reflect the arrangements currently in place.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The report links to the Authority's statutory duties in relation to control of vibration from use of work equipment.

4. REPORT

- 4.1 Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) is caused by repeated and frequent use of hand-held vibrating tools - for example, power drills, chainsaws, pneumatic drills, etc. It may also be caused by holding or working with machinery that vibrates. It is not clear how vibration causes the condition. It is probably due to slight but repeated injury to the small nerves and blood vessels in the fingers. Over time these may gradually lose some of their function and cause symptoms such as numbness, tingling and loss of sensation. Possibly, up to 1 in 10 people who work regularly with vibrating tools may develop HAVS.
- 4.2 The Draft Policy details the roles and responsibilities at all levels for the control of vibration.
- 4.3 The draft Corporate Management Arrangements detail the practical measures which will be undertaken to control the risk from use of vibratory tools, including;

Risk Assessment, which determines employees' daily vibration exposures, with enough accuracy to establish who is likely to be exposed at or above the exposure action value or exposure limit value as detailed in the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005 as well as the preventative and protective measures in place to control the risk.

Selection and Procurement, of equipment includes the sourcing of low vibration emitting tools.

Maintenance, of equipment can dramatically reduce vibration emitted from power tools and other equipment; the arrangements require suitable maintenance regimes.

Health surveillance must be robust to monitor the effects of exposure to vibration from the start of employment to establish a baseline and throughout employment in relevant posts. Those staff removed from work with vibratory tools will be removed from ongoing surveillance, symptoms which require no further exposure are unlikely to recover to the level where exposure to vibration can be re-introduced. In 2016 94 employees have been seen by the Occupational Health Physician who specialises in the assessment of vibration induced diseases and is registered with the HSE.

Instruction & Training, both initial and refresher training will be provided to relevant staff and records of training retained.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no significant implications associated with this report.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The cost of health surveillance is covered by the Service areas affected.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no personnel implications associated with this report.

8. CONSULTATIONS

8.1 The report reflects the views of the listed consultees.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The contents of this report are noted and the draft policy and corporate management arrangements (attached) approved and referred to Cabinet for consideration.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 To ensure the Authority meets its statutory responsibilities with regards to premises.

Author: Donna Jones, Service Manager, Safety, Safety and Welfare
Consultees: Paul James, Health and Safety Manager
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HR Strategy Group
Trade Union Representatives

Appendices

Appendix 1 Control of Hand Arm Vibration Exposure at Work Policy

Appendix 2 Corporate Management Arrangements for the Control of Hand Arm Vibration Exposure at Work