

HEALTH AND SAFETY IN SCHOOLS TASK AND FINISH REVIEW GROUP

TUESDAY, 14th NOVEMBER 2006

**Present:** Councillor Hughes, Councillor A. J. Scott and Councillor Richmond.

**Officers Present:** Colin Morrison, Health and Safety Manager.

- Discussion ensued on the areas of consideration required under the remit of this Task and Finish Review, with the main areas being identified as:
  - the process of holding Schools to account for the adherence to Health and Safety guidance and compliance with required legislation;
  - the evidence required to demonstrate that Schools are adhering to Health and Safety guidance and complying with required legislation;
  - the action that can be taken to encourage Schools to adhere to Health and Safety guidance and comply with required legislation.
- Concerns were also expressed regarding schools that employed an external contractor to remedy any Health and Safety issues, especially in relation to proof of works done and whether such work was of a required standard.
- Discussion moved to asbestos in Schools and Colin Morrison confirmed that it was possible for buildings up to the mid 1980's to contain asbestos. 4 years ago all Schools had a survey to confirm the location of all asbestos. Colin also proceeded to advise on the various types of inspection.
- One of the main problems is actually obtaining someone to conduct the investigations, however Colin stressed that it is something that needs to be done. Colin highlighted that there is training available to Schools, and details regarding this are on the extranet. Colin confirmed that he was holding a meeting on the 15th November 2006 to re-visit the issue of asbestos training.
- Another of the main problems is that some Schools approach an unapproved contractor, however this is a School Procurement matter.
- Procedure upon discovering asbestos:
  - Notify Health and Safety Executive (HSE);
  - Look at where and what Asbestos was;
  - Register of those people exposed;
  - Health and Safety Executive will ask how did a School procure the contract?  
Intrusive work should not be carried out without a Type III Survey.
- Discussion moved onto training for Schools, and Colin Morrison stated that there is no Service Level Agreement between Schools and the Local Authority for training. Colin stated that schools are unable to afford training and that premises inspections are not being taken up, despite training courses being available.

- Colin reiterated that the biggest problems are identifying which organisations or individuals schools are using instead, and whether the work being conducted is of a required standard. Colin expressed the opinion that it was important to identify those not subscribed to the Local Authority and ascertain who they were using.
- Colin Morrison suggested that the perception of a Health and Safety Officer was of “a man with a clipboard.... looking to stop certain practices”, however explained that he wished to get away from this stereotype and be perceived as being there to advise and encourage good practice.
- Colin Morrison outlined that he was in the process of conducting a “Health Check” on all schools to ascertain each individual Schools position, and felt that this should eventually form part of the Schools Prospectus and be part of School Policy. Some general issues around this were discussed, such as training, the ethos of the school and involving children in a culture of Health and Safety. Colin suggested that Schools should have a designated Health and Safety Governor and a designated Member of Staff responsible for Health and Safety. Colin felt that there was a certain amount of ‘lip service’ paid by Schools, and possibly in the past from the Health and Safety Service, however as Health and Safety Manager he can not ignore the situation, but did acknowledge that, like in any walks of life, there were good and bad individuals. Colin felt that investigation needed to be conducted into identifying the barriers that Schools experience, which hinder them in Health and Safety issues.
- Colin Morrison stated that he felt that there needed to be a change in attitudes and highlighted a number of areas of concern:
  - There has been an increase in violent incidents;
  - A lack of co-operation from schools in attending training courses (Colin pointed out that he had two members of staff trained to train teaching staff);
  - The need to make non-reporting of incidents the exception to the rule;
- One training issue highlighted by Members was the lack of ‘Restraint Training’ available for teaching staff.
- Colin Morrison reported that the infrastructure was in place, however the issue facing the Members was to encourage engagement from schools. One way of achieving this may be to make the ‘extranet’ more user friendly. It was acknowledged by all parties that good relationship building should work both ways.
- Discussion ensued on the possibility of looking at a target driven / reward system as an incentive – the use of OHSAS 180001 or Charter Mark to provide recognition to those schools complying with the Health and Safety structure.
- Colin Morrison stated that once the “Health Check” had been completed on all schools he hoped to conduct an “Annual Review”, which would produce a set of minutes and action points. Colin stated that he had two part-time staff, who, by working for three days per week, would be able to conduct the Annual Review.
- Colin Morrison stated that he has also produced a draft Service Level Agreement regarding training costs and suggested that Display Screen Equipment Training can be provided free of charge. Any other training would incur a fee, however suggested the

example, that Schools could sign up to a Service Level Agreement at a cost of £300 per year, for which schools would receive 6 places over the course of the year, which could be redeemed on any training course. Examples of training courses available included Manual Handling and Risk Assessment.

- Colin also stressed that it was important to record, and encourage Schools to record, training received thoroughly.

**Action Points:**

- **Identify the proportion of schools that contain Asbestos.**
- **Identify methods of target driven or reward incentives (such as ‘Charter Mark’) and identify how these may be applied to encourage compliance.**
- **Provide Members with a list of Training Courses available to Schools.**

**RESOLVED – That the Health and Safety in Schools Task and Finish Group will meet again at the end of January 2007 to discuss the progress made with the “Schools Health Check”.**