

HEALTH AND SAFETY IN SCHOOLS TASK AND FINISH REVIEW GROUP

TUESDAY, 30th JANUARY 2007

**Present:** Councillor Hughes, Councillor Richmond and Mr. R. Bennett.

**Apologies:** Councillor A. J. Scott.

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

- Colin Morrison reported that the Health and Safety Team had visited fourteen schools over a seven-week period and conducted a series of 'health checks'. Colin stated that the schools that had been visited to date were very appreciative of the approach and welcomed the assistance offered by the Health and Safety Team, which included advice for improvements and highlighting good practice.
- Colin outlined that the main areas that had been investigated during the Health Check were:
  - Asbestos
  - Legionella / Legionnaire's Disease
  - Health and Safety Policies
  - Risk Assessments
  - Training
  - Staff Inductions
  - Premises Inspections
- Colin stated that the two main areas of concern were Asbestos and Legionella / Legionnaire's Disease.
- **Asbestos** – Colin reported that ten of Darlington's schools are Asbestos free, and that all the remaining schools have had an Asbestos Survey conducted, from which Asbestos Management Plans (I and II) have been developed.
- **Legionella** – Colin reported that schools were under the perception that they had an agreement with Community Services to cover the responsibility for Legionella, however this is not the case. All schools have now had a Legionella Risk Assessment carried out by Community Services and all schools except St. Bede's have now made arrangements for the control of Legionella. The arrangements are set out below:
  - 1 School (St. Bede's) have made no arrangements in relation to Legionella control.
  - 3 schools have made arrangements with an unapproved external contractor in relation to Legionella control.
  - 31 schools have entered into a Service Level Agreement with Community Services (SLA Option II)
  - 1 school has entered into a Service Level Agreement with Community Services (SLA Option I).

- Service Level Agreement Option II covers everything except the periodic checks of the system (which in these cases are usually conducted by the Caretaker), however Service Level Agreement Option I covers everything including the periodic checks.
- In the remaining new build Schools (under the PFI arrangements), Legionella control is the responsibility of the buildings owners and work is being conducted by H2O Chemicals.
- Councillor Hughes enquired as regard the difference in cost between SLA Option I and SLA Option II, which Colin explained was approximately £200.00.
- **Training** – Currently there are no Service Level Agreements between schools and the Council for the provision of Health and Safety Training. Schools are free, if they wish, to purchase their Health and Safety Training externally. Colin explained he was hoping to develop a training programme which schools could buy into (For example, pay £300.00 and received 6 training sessions to be used in a training year). Mr. Bennett suggested that Training sessions should be arranged for Teacher Training Days in order to maximise staff turnout. Mr. Bennett also suggested that teachers resented doing Risk Assessments when conducting such tasks as re-arranging a classroom. Colin stated that the offer of training had been very well received.
- Colin also highlighted his desire to develop an Awards Scheme to reward those schools complying with Health and Safety requirements, and encourage schools to apply for national Health and Safety Awards Schemes. Colin was also keen to reward pupils, in order to also heighten their awareness.
- Discussion then ensued on identifying those responsible in schools; the involvement of School Governors; the use of a specifically identified Health and Safety Governor; possibly putting facts and figures on the internet and ‘naming and shaming’ schools; the fact that some schools are selecting the lower priced Service Level Agreement for the sake of saving £200.00; individual responsibility and corporate responsibility, and the effect the threat of legal action may have in encouraging involvement; the possibility that a report be forwarded to Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis reflecting good and poor Health and Safety performers; the obligation to families and employees, as well as the obligation to pupils, and the lack of involvement of Health and Safety in OfSted reports.

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