

Partnership on Health And Safety in Scotland

Paper Update on Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives Occupational Health and Safety

Purpose of the Paper

To inform the partnership of the developing strategies for occupational health and safety through the Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives. (SCHWL)

Background

Occupational Health and Safety services offered by the Centre are available through the Healthy Working Lives advice line, website, group training and workplace visits carried out by advisers to assist organisations in identifying occupational health and safety issues, then offering proactive solutions suitable to the size and nature of the organisation. This involves the use of a series of tools developed in-house plus signposting to other agencies.

The key target group for occupational health and safety activity is the Small and Medium sized organisation, (SME's) employing less than 250 employees. The purpose of the service is to raise awareness of work related accidents and ill health and provide suitable solutions to assist organisations to manage their occupational health and safety, thereby contributing to reduction in workplace injury and ill health.

Discussion Points

Healthy Working Lives Services

From January to October 2008, 413 first time occupational health and safety workplace visits were undertaken with a total of 724 visits including repeat visits. From April to October 2008, 1513 health promotion visits were undertaken.

National Advice Line

Calls to the National Advice-line are as follows –
Calls for 2006 – 3145
Calls for 2007 – 2983
Calls for 2008 to 25 November 2008 - 3108

A breakdown of the nature of enquiries made to the National Adviceline during the period January to 25 November 2008 indicated that 11.8% of calls related to the Award programme, 12% to occupational health and 45.2% related to health and safety. The figures exclude email enquiries driven through the website, of which, there have been 342 in the current reporting period.

Website Transactions

Healthyworkinglives.com, the Centre's new website, which was launched in July 2008, had by the end of November 2008 attracted almost 60,000 visits with an average transaction length of 3 minutes. The average number of weekly visits is currently in excess of 4000, and is continuing to grow.

Restructuring of Delivery

NHS Highland and the Island Boards continue to discuss a Service Level Agreement regarding the appointment of a shared Healthy Working Lives OH&S post. It is hoped

this will be progressed in the near future, although the issue of Board liabilities arising should Advisers be made redundant, remains to be resolved.

The centre has recently advertised for a Delivery Manager (Occupational Health) to lead on the development of occupational health service provision. An offer of employment has been made and we are awaiting confirmation of acceptance.

Development update

HSE/SCHWL partnership

SCHWL is in discussion with HSE to investigate potential projects and closer working where work activities overlap in areas other than enforcement to identify provision of workplace interventions. A report will be presented to PHASS in March 2009.

STUC/SDC

A joint initiative is being taken forward by The Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC), Scottish Development Centre for Mental Health (SDC) and the Centre, with support from the Scottish Government, to raise awareness of the benefits of healthy inclusive workplaces in relation to overall mental health and to improve support for workers with mental health issues in workplaces. The project will also seek to explore channels where trade unions can offer more practical and sensitive support.

Scottish Food and Drink Federation (SFDF)

This new project is a partnership between Health Scotland's Food & Health Alliance Co-ordinator and the Centre and aims to develop a programme targeted specifically at employees in the food production industry, a sector characterised by low pay, difficult working environments, and which employs significant numbers of migrant workers. This project is in the initial stages but it aims to encourage employers in the sector to develop a range of health improvement and health and safety programmes. SFDF will carry out a rolling programme of promotional work to give credit and highlight examples of best practice for those companies who successfully participate in the programme.

Sickness Absence Management (SAM) Project

The Glasgow University Report on the SAM tool is now complete, allowing finalisation of our own Institute of Occupational Medicine (IOM) scoping study report which will then be presented to the HSE as a way forward for the existing tool. The Centre's use of the tool will tie into the Scottish Government Action Plan accident/absence reporting, tie into Award development and delivery and affirm partnership working.

The proposed model encompasses provision of an online absence recording and reporting tool, face to face training, technical support, absence management support training and statistical feedback to help develop a national picture.

Prevention of Violence and Aggression Programme

The Violence at Work Prevention Manager post, was filled on a permanent basis by Linda Shanahan, in November 2008. A public relations campaign is taking place between November 2008 and March 2009, and aims to encourage employers to deal more effectively with the issue of protecting staff from violence, and to signpost them to the Advice line and the Centre's website. A number of further projects are being developed with the aim of promoting the Centre as a resource:-

A conference is planned for March 2009 aimed at those working in the Voluntary sector. The key aims of the conference will be to:

- Identify champions within the Centre's client base

- Provide guidance to overcoming commonly perceived obstacles to implementing effective measures to protect staff;
- Encourage closer working between enforcing authorities;
- Agree a future strategy to assist organisations in this sector recognise and manage issues associated with violence to staff.

A Steering Group comprising representatives from Local Authorities and Trade Unions, is working to formulate a portfolio of good practice to encourage Local Authorities to work more effectively in protecting staff and support HWL Advisers working with clients in the Local Authority sector.

Further projects under consideration include working with the HSE Partnership on Work Related Violence, in relation to violence to “faith workers”.

Eastern European Workers

The Centre is working in partnership with the HSE and other partners to run a series of events aimed at the migrant worker population in the Aberdeen area. The first on 1st December engaged community groups working with Polish workers in the area and was aimed at informing appropriate strategies for employee engagement. This event was supported by Polish Consulate staff. The next event is a Safety & Health Awareness Day (SHAD) in January 2009, for employers of migrant workers. This will be followed by an event for migrant workers themselves based on the lessons learned from the first two events. The work ties into the Scottish Government Action plan for Health and Safety and Health Scotland’s work on migrant workers. This work is bringing together SCHWL, HSE, Scottish Qualifications Authority and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Polish Consulate, Polish Association, Gang master Licensing Authority, Local Colleges and Aberdeenshire Council.

Worker Involvement

The evaluation of the work undertaken with the STUC on worker involvement is nearing completion, and the finalisation of a tool kit on worker engagement in SMEs is being completed by STOW college. Part of this work involved a free training course available through STOW which will also be evaluated. Seven courses have been run so far this year, attracting over 100 students.

Development of training events

Staff continue to develop and run training courses including Fire Risk assessment with local Fire and Rescue Services, H&S awareness sessions with Business Gateway and Noise awareness with Environmental Health Officers. The Centre is also involved in the development of an ESOL course in Clackmannanshire and hopes to continue this work in other areas, particularly linking course development to work around worker involvement. (Training migrant workers as employee H&S reps to assist their community in the workplace) A suitable partner for this project has still to be identified.

Online learning

Strathclyde Universities - Scottish Centre for Occupational Safety and Health (SCOSH), Online Certificate of Professional Development in Workplace Health, supported by SCHWL is fully subscribed. The Centre is heavily involved in the development of this CDP course and offer bursaries to participants.

Occupational Road Risk

The Centre, working jointly with The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA), have undertaken a series of occupational road risk training seminars. These events are proving to be very successful. The latest, running in November was for HR managers and had 108 registrations for the event and 89 attendees. There appears to

be considerable appetite for the issue and assistance in offering management solutions and it is planned to run similar events next year for the voluntary sector and unions. Following on from the seminars, the Scottish Occupational Road Safety Alliance (SORSA) has developed a 2 year action plan for its development and function, to promote the risk and offer assistance in risk reduction from driving whilst at work. This ongoing work ties into the Scottish Government Action plan for Health and Safety and the soon to be published road safety strategy.

Occupational Health Service development

The Centre is developing its Occupational Health services and work is underway to develop a series of tool kits for staff to better identify and assist organisations in addressing occupational health need. These tool kits will eventually be available to others. In line with the Black report recommendations, the Centre hopes to broker services for clients with Occupational Health providers, assisting to ensure limited resource is placed in the most appropriate place. This work ties into the Scottish Government Action plan for Health and Safety, links to the Black report and the EU campaign on Health and Safety.

Scottish Chamber of Safety

Lord McKenzie, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Work and Pensions, launched a Scottish Chamber of Safety (SCoS) initiative in June 2008. This initiative will lead on from the "For Business by Business seminars" held in the Spring of 2008, to encourage mentoring and partnerships with business. The initiative led by the Centre and SCoS is supported by the HSE and RoSPA. The initiative will focus on the creation of a health needs assessment process for SMEs which will be delivered through networking and mentoring by Scottish Safety Groups and others. The initiative called "Health Risks at Work, do you know yours" will be launched to Safety Groups and others at an event in February, with a number of organisations being asked to pilot the materials and feedback to the working group. These pilots will be showcased at the RoSPA Scotland conference in September 09. The work links with the Scottish Government Action Plan for Health and Safety and EU Health and Safety campaign.

Potential projects with Environmental Health

The Centre is in early discussions with Dumfries & Galloway Council Environmental Services around a number of partnership working initiatives including: a programme of interventions with Golf Courses; mutual provision of each other's promotional materials; involvement in the use of (Office Shops and Railways Premises Act (OSR 1) forms for registration with the Local Authority: follow up to Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) reports and, voluntary company involvement in supporting determination of risk ranking.

HWL Website

The OHS web group meets quarterly to update materials and discuss development of the OHS pages on the website. The HWL OHS newsletter is a quarterly, free, registration only service offered through the website, it currently has a circulation of 800. The autumn edition was late in circulation (November 08) and the winter edition is expected to be issued at the end of January 09. The content for this newsletter comes from OHS advisers and will be available on the website once the newsletter is posted.

Action

Members are asked to note developments and consider how their organisations can assist and facilitate this development.

A paper by Steve Bell, Strategic Director, (SCHWL)