

# **DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Personnel Committee - 12 June 2006

**REPORT ON:** Occupational Health Policy and Action Plan

**REPORT BY:** Assistant Chief Executive (Management)

**REPORT NO:** 371-2006

## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval of the Policy.

## **2 RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2.1 It is recommended that the Personnel Committee approves the policy to enable the Council to have a more structured approach to the provision of Occupational Health

## **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 An allowance of an additional £50,000 is to be taken from the General Fund Reserve for this year to help meet the cost of additional occupational health surveillance that will be required to enable compliance with the Council's legal requirements.

3.2 Adequate financial provisions require to be made in future years by all departments who are required to undertake additional occupational health surveillance and health monitoring.

## **4 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The proposal will ensure that the health is protected by creating safe, clean, pleasant environments, wherever possible in which we work.

## **5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None.

## **6 BACKGROUND**

6.1 The Corporate Health & Safety Plan 2006/07 had identified the need to review occupational health provision and the need for an Occupational Health Policy. This policy is being introduced to improve occupational health provision and reduce the health risks of employees engaged in potentially hazardous work activities.

6.2 This policy provides a framework and includes an occupational health strategy to ensure that occupational health surveillance is undertaken to monitor the health of employees who are exposed to health risks.

- 6.3 The Council has received an Improvement Notice from the Health & Safety Executive requiring that appropriate arrangements are made for the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of occupational health provision as a protective measure to ensure the health and safety of Council employees. This policy is a fundamental part of that process.
- 6.4 An Action Plan has been prepared which is being progressed to address the terms of the Improvement Notice.
- 6.5 A document was produced to identify the legal requirements which determine the situations and circumstances where occupational health surveillance is required. This document was distributed to all relevant departments in March 2006.
- 6.6 Surveys have commenced requiring Departments to identify the work activities that could give rise to the need for occupational health surveillance. The surveys will identify groups of employees and the types of health surveillance required. At present the survey has identified significant numbers of risk assessments that require to be undertaken to identify whether health surveillance is required.
- 6.7 The qualifications and competencies of occupational health providers for the various types of health surveillance required, is currently being sought. Competent occupational health providers then need to be sought with service level agreements and/or contracts being established
- 6.8 A database for departments to record and monitor occupational health surveillance has been produced. A pilot study using the database is to commence in June, to ensure that the database meets the requirements of the Council, and satisfies the legal requirements for occupational health surveillance.

## 7. **MAIN TEXT**

- 7.1 There is a legal requirement placed upon the Council to effectively manage occupational health risks to which employees may be exposed as a result of their work activities.
- 7.2 The Council has until recently mainly focused upon managing health and safety risks with occupational health surveillance being provided in a less than consistent manner.
- 7.3 The Occupational Health Policy will provide a robust framework to ensure that occupational health surveillance is addressed as an integral part of existing health and safety controls.
- 7.4 The Trade Unions have been fully consulted on this matter and was discussed at the Council Health & Safety Committee on the 18 May 2006.

8. **CONSULTATION**

8.1 All Departments and the Trade Unions have been consulted in the preparation of this policy.

9. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

9.1 None.

J C Petrie  
Assistant Chef Executive (Management)

5 June 2006

# **DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL**

# **OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH POLICY**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Dundee City Council is committed to ensuring effective health and safety management and performance throughout all Council Departments, and requires that health and safety matters be given appropriate consideration with equal status to other service demands. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Council's health and safety policy.

## **2. POLICY STATEMENT**

Occupational health relates to the effects that the working environment and work activities may have on the health of employees. It also takes account of the influence that an employee's health may have on their ability to carry out their work. The Council recognises the benefits of good health and will endeavour to promote, and maintain, the highest degree of physical, mental and social well-being of its employees. The following Occupational Health Strategy has been formulated to assist in meeting this policy statement.

## **3. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH STRATEGY**

The Council will provide an Occupational Health Service to its employees through the provision of Occupational Health Providers and, where necessary, referral to external specialist medical advisers.

The Occupational Health Providers will assist management to:

- Identify jobs with health risks and provide advice on known risks
- Identify hazards and appropriate controls for health risks at work
- Undertake pre-employment health screening
- Undertake health surveillance
- Reduce sickness absence levels
- Provide information and guidance on health aspects of employment
- Undertake health assessment on referral
- Provide medical advice on request with regard to re-deployment

## **4. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS**

This policy and its associated guidance notes, outline the provisions the Council will make to discharge its duties in relation to the following statutory requirements:

- The Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974, Section 2 (1) – "The duty to provide and maintain a working environment for employees that is, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe without risks to health and adequate as regards facilities and arrangements for their welfare at work."

- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulation 1999, Regulation 5 (1), - "to make appropriate arrangements for the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of preventative and protective occupational health measures".

## 5. GUIDANCE

Guidance notes will be issued in support of various aspects of the Occupational Health Strategy including:

1. Procedures for referral to the Occupational Health Providers
2. Blood-borne viruses
3. Pre-employment health screening
4. Immunisation arrangements
5. Specific health risks

## 6. PLANNING

The Council's Health & Safety Policy requires each department to produce a plan detailing how health and safety risks are to be identified, assessed, controlled and managed. Occupational health risks are to be addressed in the same manner.

All Departments are required to produce a table ( See Appendix 1) of occupational health risks to which employees may be exposed in the course of their work. Departments are required to complete the table and identify potential hazards that may require occupational health advice or surveillance to effectively control the risks. The work activities that could cause exposure to the occupational health hazard are to be recorded along with the groups of employees at risk. The table also requires departments to record whether a suitable risk assessment is currently available and determine if a further detailed evaluation of the risk is required. Those completing the table are also required to determine whether occupational health surveillance is liable to be part of the risk controls. Those completing this task are to refer to the separate document "Occupational Health - The Legal Requirements". All Departments are required to complete this exercise within 3 months from the approval of this policy. Thereafter departments are to keep this table up-to-date and under review. The Corporate Health & Safety Section will directly assist Departments that do not have their own Health & Safety Officer, to complete this task. Employees, safety representatives and representatives of employee safety need to be consulted during the completion of the table, to help ensure that no occupational health risk is overlooked.

Once the table has been completed, senior management in each Department is required to further examine the occupational health hazards where either no suitable risk assessment currently exists or where a further evaluation of the occupational health risks is required. Trained risk assessors will be required to assist in this process. Competent health and safety advice may be required, during this process, including access to competent occupational health advice from the Council's occupational health providers. The occupational health providers will be required, on occasions, to determine how occupational health risks are to be effectively controlled and what type and level of occupational health surveillance is required. All requests for occupational health advice are to be arranged and co-ordinated via the Personnel Department.

## **7. ORGANISING**

The Personnel Department will make the necessary arrangements on behalf of the Council to source sufficient occupational health provision. A table detailing the qualifications and competencies required of occupational health providers to undertake specific examinations, tests or health surveillance has been included in the policy (See Appendix2)

The risk assessment process needs to take account of the views of employees and their safety representatives who will have a practical knowledge of the work activities being undertaken. Trade union safety representatives should also be consulted in the planning and review of risk assessments.

It is an integral part of a manager's or supervisor's role to ensure that the findings of risk assessments and risk controls are communicated to the relevant employees. This may take the form of written instructions, briefing sessions or organised meetings. Managers need to consider the most appropriate form of communication for each situation. This is a key aspect of any risk control system and therefore evidence that instruction, information and training has taken place must be retained by each department.

All occupational health surveillance and monitoring will be recorded on a Master Occupational Health Surveillance database. Departments will be responsible for populating the database with the relevant information, recording the names of employees, who require occupational health surveillance. The Personnel Department will monitor the populating of the database. The results of all occupational health surveillance will be recorded and stored in the master database. Only authorised users in each department will be able to input or view data relevant to their own department.

Where occupational health surveillance highlights that a problem exists, then the relevant occupational health provider will be required to investigate the cause of the health problem and provide the necessary occupational health advice to remedy the situation, which may include reviewing risk assessments and risk controls. Where it is known by management that an employee is returning to work after ill-health or injury, the line manager must follow the requirements of the Council's Sickness Absence Policy and conduct an interview with the employee. During this process it may be necessary for the line manager to seek occupational health advice prior to allowing the employee to return to their normal duties. In such cases the line manager must seek advice from the Personnel Department, and obtain advice from the occupational health provider as required.

## **8. CONTROL**

The Personnel Department is responsible for sourcing competent occupational health providers to meet the needs of the Council. All departments requiring occupational health services must make the necessary arrangements through the Personnel Department. The Personnel Department will provide a co-ordinating role with occupational health providers to ensure that a sufficient range of services is provided. A supplementary document will be produced detailing how appointments and referrals are made with the Council's occupational providers. Performance level agreements will also be established with each provider detailing the specific services required with the necessary quality and performance standards required by the Council.

## **9. MONITORING**

The Personnel Department will actively monitor the in-putting of data into the Master Occupational Health Surveillance database. The database will be designed to ensure that reports can be generated upon request, to determine if health surveillance is taking place within the required time scales. The Personnel Department will undertake a satisfaction survey within the Council consulting all departments within 12 months from the approval of this policy. The information gained from any active monitoring will be reported to the Council Management Team and shared with safety representatives via the Council Health & Safety Committee. The Corporate Health and Safety Section will also conduct a number of routine inspections to ensure that preventative and protective measures are being adopted to effectively manage occupational health risks. Where necessary occupational health providers will be asked to investigate cases of work-related ill-health on behalf of departments.

## **10. REVIEW**

This Policy and its accompanying supplementary documentation shall be reviewed, added to, or modified as required, and will, in any case, be reviewed every 18 months. This Policy, and any revision of it, will be brought to the attention employees of the Council. Documents produced under, or supplementary, to this Policy will also be brought to the attention of all departments and the Council Health & Safety Committee.



**LIST OF COMPETENCIES REQUIRED FOR SPECIFIC HEALTH SCREENING**

<b>HEALTH SCREENING</b>	<b>REQUIRED COMPETENCY</b>
Audiometry	Specific courses - (list provided by British Society of Audiologists)
HAVS	Syllabus from Faculty of Occupational Medicine
Face-fit testing	Specific training (theoretical and practical) from manufacturers. Certificate of Competence from B.O.H.S.
Spirometry	Specific training from manufacturers. Certificate of competence from Association of Respiratory Technology and Physiology
Lead levels	EMAS / HSE appointed doctor
OH Doctors / Nurses	Registration now requires proof of competence in specific disciplines - individual checks required for OH professionals.