



Desk Top Health and Safety Review

Islington Council

Consultant: **Vinc Murphy,**
CMIOSH,RSP,
Health and Safety Consultant

Date: **29 July 2015**

Contents

Section	Topic	Page No
1	Executive Summary	3
2	Introduction	4
3	Observations and Recommendations on the Health and Safety Management System	5
4	Conclusions	7
Appendix 1		8

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Desk Top Review of Islington Councils Health and Safety Policy shows an excellent approach with all of the key aspects of a well-established management system being in place.

The review considered the Corporate Health and Safety Policy and a small number of framework documents and associated guidance. Evidence was clearly available of recent changes to “policy” and legislative requirements are referenced in the documents.

The only issue for Islington Council is the Corporate Health and Safety Policy is 46 pages long which, in general, direct the “user” elsewhere, mainly to the “Framework documents”.

It is the Framework documents which provide the detail of importance to the Council to ensure consistent high standards of health and safety management. There may be a degree of duplication which can be avoided or reduced through revising the amount of detail in the Corporate Arrangements. In many organisations the “Framework Documents” would be the Arrangements. This comment should be considered as an observation rather than a firm recommendation.

Islington Council should now consider, if having not already done so, moving on to being audited using more in-depth audit processes such as the RoSPA QSA model or seek accreditation to BS OHSAS 18001. This will test the written word in more detail, but crucially this approach will examine the actual implementation of the policy and written procedures.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The objective of this Desk Top Health and Safety Review is to contribute to the success and continuing development of Islington Councils Health and Safety Policy and management system. This will be achieved through the identification of those parts of the safety management system that require attention in order to bring about improvement in performance.

2.2 Traditionally health and safety monitoring schemes have concentrated on practical aspects of safety such as machinery guarding or provision of personal protective equipment. Whilst these are important in protecting employees from immediate hazards and risks, this approach does not always address aspects of the management systems that permitted the presence of those hazards and risks. HSE research has shown that over 70% of accidents can be attributed to inadequacies in management systems.

2.3 This review is based on the Health and Safety Executive's publication HSG65 'Successful Health and Safety Management'. The review is not a risk assessment and does not guarantee compliance with legal requirements. Absence of comment on any issue should not be construed that arrangements are in accordance with legal obligations.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

3.1 Health and Safety Policy Statement:

3.1.1 Three Health and Safety Policy Statement are in evidence and signed by the appropriate person.

3.1.2 The Lead Director for Health and Safety has been nominated as the Director responsible for Health and Safety.

3.1.4 As this is a desk top exercise it is unclear how the three statements are communicated to employees and other stakeholders.

3.2 Organisation and Arrangements

3.2.1 Responsibilities for health and safety have been allocated across the council with excellent detail and clarity.

3.2.2 Appendix 2 of HSG65 helps by describing three key management functions with respect to health and safety and uses terms such as Policy Makers, Planners and Implementers. The organisational chart appears to follow this approach with Directors, Premises Managers and Line Managers filling the respective roles.

3.2.3 The Health and Safety Policy for Islington Council contains “Corporate Policies”, these documents aim to give direction for the key issues within the council.

3.2.4 The Corporate Policies lack the detail expected in that they are in the form of general guidance rather than the expected directive style that should clearly contain measurable performance standards such as what, why, when, how etc. This approach is supplemented by framework documents and guidance for both management and employees. This information can be found on the intranet system “izzi”.

3.2.5 The framework documents, of which a small number were reviewed, are written in the style of HSG65, the activities expected to be undertaken are defined. This approach is excellent.

3.2.6 Written procedure state that formal health and safety meetings are held with a fixed agenda used. Safety Representatives from across the Council attend the meetings. This is another firm indication of good practice regarding conciliation with staff.

3.2.7 Training and competencies are identified in section 4.32 of the Corporate Arrangements. Many aspects of the “training cycle” are identified with further information detail available elsewhere on the Councils website.

3.3 Planning

3.3.1 The Corporate Arrangements clarifies how Health and safety targets are developed in 4.27 – Performance Monitoring. The process involves the CMB, Executive and wider consultation. This is considered to be a corporate planning function” as required in HSG 65.

3.3.2 The information regarding risk assessment (4.30) within the corporate policy is brief, it does however imply that best practice requirements, e.g. a five steps approach is incorporated with competent assistance and training requirements also covered.

3.3.3 Managers must take responsibility for managing risks within their departments and therefore take a lead role with the safety advisor acting in a support role is required.

3.3.4 The extent to which the organisation is managing selected areas of risk is discussed further in 4.30 with external assistance used in specialist areas.

3.4 Measuring Performance

3.4.1 4.27 builds upon performance monitoring with “risk based inspections carried out by Line Managers. No reference to further guidance is made although a standard checklist is mentioned.

Recommendation:

Clarify where the further information regarding inspections can be found within the wider management system.

3.4.2 Senior Managers, independent to the involved function, carry out accident investigations as outlined in 4.1 Accident and Incident Reporting and Investigations.

3.5 Audit and Reviewing Performance

3.5.1 Auditing (4.3) is carried out on an internal and external basis, the evidence reviewed suggests a firm understanding of the, purposes aims and processes of Auditing of the health and safety management s system. The review process was discussed earlier under performance monitoring

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Desk Top Review has found an excellent framework for the management of Health and Safety within Islington Council which clearly identifies with HSG 65.

It is unusual for only one formal recommendation to be identified, and even more so for that to be a low key procedural based item – where the information regarding the carting out of inspections can be found.

As the current standard of the health and safety management system is high, the next measure should be that of assessing the implementation of the “written word”.

Recommendations:

- *Clarify in Corporate Arrangement 4.27 where the further information regarding inspections can be found within the wider management system.*
- *Seek external assessment of the implementation of the Islington Council health and safety management system.*

APPENDIX 1

Summary of the latest HSE guidance given in HSG65 on the content of the health and safety policy statement

The health and safety policy statement should:

Be signed and dated by the Director or Chief Executive of the organisation.

Identify the Director or Senior Manager with overall responsibility for policy formulation, implementation and development.

Set the direction for the organisation communicating senior management's values, beliefs and commitment to health and safety.

Establish the importance of health and safety objectives in relation to other Council objectives.

Explain the basis of the policy and the contribution it can have to Council performance.

Commit the management to support the policy with adequate financial and physical resource and by ensuring the competence of all employees.

Commit the management to provide any necessary expert advice.

Commit the organisation to pursuing progressive improvements in health and safety performance with the legal requirements defining the minimum standards.

Commit the management to plan, regularly review and develop the policy arrangements.

Explain the responsibilities of managers and the contribution of other employees to the successful implementation of the policy and formulation of procedures.

Commit the management and the entire organisation to maintaining effective systems of communication on health and safety matters.

Recognise that people are an important asset.

Recognise that accidents, incidents and ill health are generally failings in management controls and are not necessarily the fault of individuals.

Commit the organisation to provide an annual site report on health and safety performance.