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Report Estates Workplace Health Project

Summary

This project was undertaken during the summer of 2018 to promote the protection of the health and wellbeing of staff working on industrial estates in the Chichester District by providing advice, suitable health & safety training, wellbeing advice and signposting to other support. Officers of the Council's Health Protection Team first visited all the industrial estates in the District offering health & safety advice, giving out leaflets advertising training sessions and discussing any safety concerns businesses had. Subsequently health and safety training sessions were run on five dates at different locations. Many businesses sent staff and the feedback from the training was good. Businesses were advised of the assistance available from Health and Wellbeing Advisers.

Details of project operation

HSE LAC 67/2. "Advice/Guidance to Local Authorities on Targeting Interventions" directs that Councils should in addition to accident investigations and complaints work, initiate appropriate interventions. Education and raising awareness of risk control measures is one example of an intervention cited. The Health Protection team was allocated £6,500 to enable a project on the basis that it would assist small businesses on industrial estates and aid in the protection of employees. Industrial Estates were chosen because the businesses there have a higher risk of accidents and occupational ill-health.

On visiting in June 2018 approximately 250 businesses on industrial estates it was found that larger businesses usually have comprehensive risk controls in place, particularly where they are part of a chain of branches. Many very small businesses were visited which had either none or a few staff. These businesses were mostly too preoccupied with other matters to feel able to make time for safety training. Advice was given on site as appropriate. Small businesses employing five or more people were far more likely to send staff on training courses and made the most use of the sessions offered by CDC.

50 minute training sessions were run on the following topics:

- a) Risk assessment and implementing controls
- b) Manual handling assessments
- c) Chemical risk assessments
- d) Stress management for the company and individual
- e) Workplace transport
- f) Asbestos management

These topics were chosen because the HSE have found evidence that they are associated with higher risk.

Training sessions were run in Chichester and Midhurst. Businesses were invited for no charge, to send up to two staff on any or all of the six sessions. The training was run on five dates and 157 people attended. The officer time taken up on the project was back filled by the employment of a consultant to carry out more routine Team functions.

At the end of each training day, feedback forms were given to attendees. The feedback was good and included the following comments that the sessions were helpful because:

"The tutors shared their practical experiences"

"The tutors had good practical knowledge"

"The opportunity to discuss practical" situations

The training "was very interactive and practical"

The training was "easy to understand and relate to. The interaction and exercises made it easier to understand and take forward into use later."

"Various personal experiences of what works were talked about."

The tutors demonstrated "good practical knowledge"

"The open discussions helped"

"Tips to takeaway, particularly stress and ideas to put into practice"

"Lots of anecdotal experience and examples made each topic varied and interesting"

"Instant answers to questions. Trainers open attitude to discussion."

"Very useful"

"Good trainers"

"Easy to understand and laid back approach"

"Speakers shared experience and knowledge on various topics. Interactive with speakers and others in the group."

The staff from various types of companies attended including:

- a) Carpet sales and laying
- b) Electrical services. The issue of controlling subcontractors was discussed.
- c) Construction and surveying
- d) Furniture restoration
- e) Metal fabrication
- f) Machinery construction and testing
- g) Food manufacturing
- h) Logistics and transportation
- i) High risk waste collection and processing

When visiting industrial estates, officers gave out a leaflet advertising the services available via the Council's Health and Wellbeing Team. A member of that Team came to one of the sessions to do a joint presentation on Stress management and talk about the consultancy services available. A good joint discussion about management of work-related stress occurred.

Conclusions

1. The businesses attending were generally very appreciative that the council had run the project. Attendees increased knowledge levels such that they are now able to introduce changes in their workplaces. Consequently safety levels within those businesses will be improved. It is hoped that some of those attending will become Safety Champions within their businesses.
2. Some staff are suffering work-related stress. More work is needed to promote best practice in preventing ill-health caused by stress. This will be considered for future projects.
3. The project gave several Council Officers the chance to refresh their knowledge on key safety messages and engage with local businesses.

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16 January 2019

References:

1. Health and Wellbeing Service plan 2018/2019
2. HSE LAC 67/2. Advice / Guidance to Local Authorities on Targeting Interventions:
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/lau/lacs/67-2.htm>



Health and Safety training session at The Grange Community and Leisure Centre, Midhurst.