

RISK News

Issue 27

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County Council wins major award

On June 28 Norfolk County Council won a major national award for the best Health and Safety or Human Resources initiative by a local authority. The Council received the award from ALARM – The National Forum for Risk Management in the Public Sector – for the Norfolk Education Well-Being programme.

The programme, with the aim of improving the working lives of all staff in schools, started in 1998 and now operates in over 300 schools, as well as across the Education department. The intention is to roll the programme out to other council departments in the near future. Details of how the scheme works in schools are set out on page 6.

David Saunders, the Well-Being Programme Co-ordinator in Education, explains why the scheme started. "We became aware that we had a problem in our schools in terms of work pressures and staff feeling overworked and undervalued. We knew we couldn't work miracles and had no magic wand but we took small simple solutions that have worked and produced excellent results.

"We are very proud of our scheme and the difference it has made to so many people.



L-R: DAVID SAUNDERS, GUY MUNNOCH, MD OF ZURICH MUNICIPAL AND MANDY KNOWLTON-RAYNER, NCC RISK & INSURANCE
(picture courtesy of Talking Heads)

To win an award for it is icing on the cake."

The programme has now been adopted by the Teacher Support Network (one of the original sponsors) who are developing it in over 20 other education authorities.

Special features

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Produced by the Risk Management section of the Department of Finance

Comment

Welcome to the latest issue of Risk News.

Our lead article and much of this issue looks at the issues around well-being of our staff. Not just what we do at the moment but also at what is planned for the future. The Education Well-Being programme has shown the significant benefits that can arise from effective management of well-being. By extending this type of programme across the authority, and the other developments mentioned in this issue, it is hoped that similar benefits will occur.

On the subject of well-being, many congratulations are due to David Saunders and his team for winning the national ALARM award this year.

If you would like to contribute to a future issue of Risk News, or have any other comments, please contact any of the people listed below.

Contacts:

Risk and Insurance section

Derek Gorrod tel 01603 222989
fax 01603 222683
email derek.gorrod@norfolk.gov.uk

Norfolk Audit Services

Gareth Clark tel 01603 222746
fax 01603 222781
email gareth.clark@norfolk.gov.uk

Risk and Insurance tel 01603 222827
Corporate H&S tel 01603 222912
Norfolk Audit Services tel 01603 222777
Legal Services tel 01603 222961

Production of Risk News

Angie Yeomans tel 01603 223488
email angie.yeomans@norfolk.gov.uk

EUROPEAN WEEK FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK 2004



**BUILDING
IN SAFETY**

What is it?

The European Week for Safety and Health at Work is the largest occupational safety and health event of its kind in Europe. Each year the week has a different theme or focus. This year it runs from 18th to 22nd October.

What is this year's theme?

The official European theme is construction safety, under the slogan 'Building in Safety'. All safety and health institutions and organisations, trade unions, companies, managers, employees and safety representatives are invited to take part and organise their own events during this week.

What will be happening in NCC?

Within Norfolk County Council we will be focusing on construction and contractor management issues. As the week gets closer we will be putting out more information on events and activities.

Where can I find out more?

To find out more about the European H&S Week you can visit their website www.osha.eu.int/ew2004.

The site includes information packs, posters and leaflets that can be downloaded.

As NCC events and activities are confirmed you will be able to get information from the 'Health and Safety Week' pages on HR@Norfolk.

Prioritising risks

In order to manage risk it is vital that any identified risks are prioritised. This enables the most significant risks to be dealt with first or have the most attention directed at them.

When prioritising risk we consider two things:

- The likelihood of the risk occurring and;
- The impact the risk would have if it did occur

Both elements are given a score between 1 (low likelihood/impact) to 5 (high likelihood/impact) and then these scores are multiplied together to produce an overall risk rating. This can be illustrated using the risk matrix:

		IMPACT				
		Catastrophe 5	Major 4	Moderate 3	Minor 2	Insignificant 1
LIKELIHOOD	Almost certain	25	20	15	10	5
	Likely 4	20	16	12	8	4
	Possible 3	15	12	9	6	3
	Unlikely 2	10	8	6	4	2
	Rare 1	5	4	2	2	1

KEY TO MATRIX	Extreme Risk (16-25)	Immediate action required, Senior Management must be involved
	High Risk (10-15)	Senior Management attention needed and management responsibility specified
	Medium Risk (5-9)	Manage by specific monitoring or response procedures
	Low Risk (1-4)	Manage by outline procedures, unlikely to need specific or significant application of resources

Once risks have been prioritised, resources can be allocated accordingly.

However this method need not only be applied to risks; it can also be used to prioritise objectives, project components, service plans and budgets. By applying a prioritisation method you can again allocate resources accordingly. To apply this method all you need to do is decide on the definitions for likelihood and impact, i.e. what would be a catastrophe for your service or project, what would be a minor impact etc, and then fit your risks, objectives or budget items into the appropriate categories.

Prioritisation of issues can thus be viewed as a management tool rather than purely a risk management tool. In short, it is a simple way of assigning resources in such a way as to produce maximum benefit.

What could stop you doing your job?

Fire? Flood? Major accident? Loss of premises? Or loss of power, IT, communications, fuel crisis?

The reality is there doesn't have to be a major incident to effectively halt service delivery. A loss of power over a relatively short space of time could have significant effects.

The Business Continuity Team have produced contingency plans for each team, each Department, and a Corporate plan for County Hall, to act as guides to continuing service delivery in any crisis. This is what all the hard work completing the Business Impact Analysis was for. Now all the information has been analysed and embedded within each plan.

All the plans are effectively 'owned' by each team and all staff should make sure that they are familiar with them. The best way to become familiar with the plan is to use it – as an aide memoire, or (for

instance) a handy telephone book that holds contacts/suppliers details.

Better a dog-eared plan than one that is in pristine condition – which equals never used! All plans will also be available on a CD to ensure that a copy is available off site.

We will ask you to regularly check your existing plans to ensure that they still reflect your service adequately. This way we can ensure up to date information is reflected in all plans.

Now the plan for County Hall is almost complete, our next step is to look at our other premises outside the main building, and we will begin to make progress on this as soon as we can. We also plan to hold exercises for departments to make sure that roles and responsibilities are clear.

Please direct any questions / comments to diane.mortimer@norfolk.gov.uk or telephone 01603 224404

Making them pay

Each year many of our schools suffer from vandalism or theft. Every so often, the school will know, or have information about, who committed the crime and on several occasions it turns out to be one of the school's own pupils or an ex-pupil.

If we know who has caused damage to our property we obviously want to try to recover some or all of our losses, but getting any compensation can be a long - winded business. There can also be an issue where some schools are reluctant to involve the local authority or official routes, as they can achieve greater success on their own.

So . . . we want to work with schools in the future to make the process easier. To this end, we have developed new guidelines on the recovery process. These are available on the risk and insurance intranet / esinet site.

If any school needs further information or clarification, please contact Ian Ferguson of the Insurance section on 01603 222122.

New Occupational Health Advisor

The role of the Occupational Health Service may be a bit of a mystery for many staff and managers. It is a service that most of us will never use and yet one that, when needed, provides vital support.

To maximise the benefits that occupational health can provide, NCC has appointed an Occupational Health (OH) Advisor within Corporate Personnel. This new role is being taken up by Paddy Lorenzen and will report to the Corporate Health and Safety Manager.

Paddy previously worked as a nurse advisor for Norfolk and Norwich Hospital and during his time there he completed an OH Degree and managed the OH Service for the Fire Service. He then moved on to work as OH manager for Anglian Windows before taking up his new post here.

As Paddy says, "I hope my new role will enable me to remove some of the mystery surrounding OH and to help both managers and staff understand how and when OH can provide support.

"If a member of staff is finding that their health is affecting their work, or that work is affecting their health, then OH could provide support and advice.

"I am looking to develop suitable policies and procedures to ensure that the current contracted OH provider, Cavell and Lind, is used to maximum effect. I will then be advising managers, Health and Safety, and Personnel as to how to put these policies and procedures into practice."

Paddy will also have a role in the management of the Norfolk Support Line, the Council's free Employee Counselling Scheme. Again this is an important service



PADDY LORENZEN

that helps staff to deal with any issues that are worrying them, thereby reducing the chances of them suffering from ill health.

"If your health affects your work, or work affects your health, OH could help"

The final part of this new position will be to roll out and then oversee the musculoskeletal rehabilitation

programme that is currently being considered within the Council. Further details about this scheme can be found on page 8.

All of the above services are important in helping staff to cope with ill health problems. The new role of OH Advisor will play a significant part in ensuring that NCC has a healthy and effective workforce.

Where an employee believes they might benefit from OH, they should initially discuss this with their line manager.

Norfolk's Education Well-Being programme

The programme, with the theme of “Well Being: making a difference” commenced in 1998 after surveys of staff indicated there were high levels of discontent, leading to feelings of stress and low morale.

Starting with a pilot of 80 schools, the process was about empowering and including staff in identifying what they felt was wrong and how they could be helped.

Objectives

The main objectives of the programme were:

- To develop lasting ways to improve the well-being of Norfolk Education employees, and through good management practice, the well-being of the organisations in which they work
- To use information from a wide range of sources, to develop training, guidance and advice which helps to identify and clarify needs
- To concentrate on three focus areas;
 - Individual well-being
 - Organisational well-being
 - The nature and context of the job.
- To monitor and evaluate the progress of the programme and it's impact.

The initial programme was a great success and we now have over 300 schools and all LEA services signed up and the programme is still growing.



Well-Being: making a difference

The process

The Well-Being process is very clear and includes a number of steps as outlined below:

- The Head teacher signs a formal statement of commitment to well-being improvement in his/her school
- The school identifies at least one volunteer Well-Being Facilitator, person/s respected by colleagues. Training is given by the team and a resource folder is provided
- A review of the school takes place using a questionnaire that **all** members of staff (teaching and non-teaching) complete confidentially
- A confidential report is produced from the completed questionnaire by the team who then visit the school to meet the Head teacher and Facilitators to discuss the report and agree on areas for development
- The Facilitators present the findings to a staff meeting. There is discussion on the “next steps” and a general consensus is sought
- A programme of development takes place under the watchful eye of the Facilitators and in close partnership with the team

- The Facilitators meet and get involved with a network group of Facilitators from other schools put in place to enable the spread of information, the sharing of ideas, successes, failures etc.
- The Facilitators use funding available from the “small grants budget” to support initiatives, development and planning in the school to meet the needs of the identified action plan
- A follow up questionnaire is completed after a year during which the action plan will have been completed. The results are analysed and an indication of progress (or not) is made. The cycle begins again

From the above you will see it is not a one-off process but is designed to become embedded into the normal school management function and goes on indefinitely.

Results

Achievements have been verified by external bodies who found:

Since joining the programme;

- 93% of head teachers rated communications between staff and pupils better or much better.
- 88% of head teachers rated staff results and performance better or much better.
- 80% of head teachers rated morale better or much better.
- 70% of head teachers rated retention of existing staff better or much better.
- 85% of head teachers rated pupil behaviour and morale better or much better.
- 86% of head teachers rated overall school effectiveness better or much better.

**The programme definitely is
“making a difference”**

Work-Life Balance

As part of an overall strategy to address stress at work, a new Work-Life Balance page has been added to the [HR@Norfolk](#) intranet site. This will act as a reference point for NCC’s existing policies that can contribute to helping people achieve a better ‘work-life balance’. These policies include:

- Career breaks
- Flexitime and flexible working
- Maternity pay and leave provisions,
- Study unrelated to work,
- Job share and part-time working,
- Home working
- Special leave for compassionate or caring responsibilities

According to the Department for Trade and Industry ‘work-life balance is about adjusting working patterns. Regardless of age, race or gender, everyone can find a rhythm to help them combine work with their other responsibilities or aspirations’.

Back on your feet again?

From January to March 2004 a pilot programme for musculoskeletal rehabilitation was carried out in NCC. The pilot covered a group of 2,500 employees in the Planning & Transportation, Education, Social Services and Cultural Services Departments.

During the pilot 157 employees were referred for assessment and treatment by physiotherapists, osteopaths, chiropractors and chiropodists.

The purpose of the pilot was to assess what benefits NCC might gain from offering musculoskeletal rehabilitation to employees with conditions thought to be caused or exacerbated by their work. In 2003/04 musculoskeletal conditions accounted for 18% of all sickness absence.

The feedback from referral managers and employees referred for treatment was overwhelmingly positive. Comments received from managers, individual employees, HR practitioners, etc. support the view that musculoskeletal rehabilitation can make a measurable difference to the organisation in both financial and non-financial terms.



NCC is now planning how musculoskeletal rehabilitation can be rolled out across the organisation. Further details will appear in future issues of Risk News as things progress.



European Health & Safety Week October 2004 Chief Executive's H&S Trophy

Have you done something to keep people safe and healthy at work?

Each year the Chief Executive's H&S Trophy is given to the team, school, section, unit or department that has made the greatest contribution to keeping people safe and healthy at work over the last year. Last year's winner was the Education Department's Well-Being Programme, which has now gone on to win a national award from the risk management organisation ALARM.

If you have done something that has helped to keep people safe and healthy at work please let us know. It could be on any health and safety issue, e.g. stress, violence, slips and trips, manual handling, safety on the road, hazardous substances, training or awareness raising.

If you would like an entry form please contact the Central Safety Team on (01603) 222802. The closing date for entries is **30th September**.

Irritable desk syndrome

A recent survey carried out by NEC-Mitsubishi shows that long working hours, cluttered desks and poor postures are making many people ill.

From a sample of 2,000 people;

- 67% said they are more tied to their desks than they were two years ago,
- 40% said they were infuriated by too much clutter and paper on their desks but could not be bothered to do anything about it,
- 35% stated they suffered from neck and back pain because they knowingly sit at their desk in an awkward position.

Tips to improve your work area

- **De-clutter:** Organise your desk to reduce stress levels and increase productivity



- **Express yourself:** Give your desk individuality to remind you of life outside work (without offending your colleagues!)
- **Take five:** Take a few minutes to stretch at your desk to reduce injury from routine activity
- **Change the scene:** Take regular breaks away from your desk to improve concentration, overall health and colleague interaction

Healthy eating

Did you know?

All types of fruit and vegetable count towards the recommended “five portions per day”. They can be fresh, frozen, canned, juiced or dried so five may be easier to achieve than you thought.



“Low” or “reduced fat” foods aren’t necessarily low in calories as they can often contain high levels of sugar or starch. If you are counting calories, read the labels.

Oysters are the richest source of zinc – needed for immunity, wound healing, healthy skin and fertility. Also reported to be an aphrodisiac!

Why do accidents happen?

Attitude
Carelessness
Carefree
Inconsideration
Diversion
Ego
Negligence
Technique

Are you overweight?

Well not you actually, but what about your vehicle? An overloaded vehicle is unsafe and a danger to the driver, passengers and the public.

All vehicles and trailers are designed to be able to carry a maximum load that must not be exceeded. This includes passengers and any other goods carried. Legislation, such as the Road Traffic Act, is there to ensure that vehicles and trailers are used in a safe condition on the public highway.

The risks from overloading

- The stopping distance is increased dramatically.
- The vehicle will not steer correctly if the load is not spread evenly.
- The suspension will not function correctly and the vehicle will become unstable when braking and cornering.
- Permanent damage can be done to the vehicle.
- The tyres and therefore the grip on the road surface will be adversely affected. In extreme cases the tyres can burst or become detached from the wheel.
- The engine and transmission will be under excess load and could overheat or fail.



Who's responsible?

The driver **and** the employer are responsible for an overloaded vehicle.

It is an offence to use, allow, cause or permit the use of an overloaded vehicle on the public highway. Vehicles can be stopped at any time by the police.

Penalties on conviction are

- A maximum fine of £5000 on the driver or employer.
- Obligatory licence endorsement or discretionary disqualification
- The County Council's Operators licence could be at risk.

If you need further information or advice please contact one of the Fleet Management team below.

John Mellor 01603 819836
Robin Peck 07787 523006
Melvyn Tibbs 07787 523005.

Safe carrying tips

Know the vehicle's carrying limit (the "payload")

For cars and small vehicles, check the vehicle handbook, ask a manufacturers main dealer, or ask the vehicle supplier.

For large vehicles, deduct the unladen weight of the vehicle from the "maximum gross vehicle weight" (normally shown on a plate in the cab) to work out the carrying capacity. Larger vehicles normally also have a max axle weight that needs to be complied with.

Carrying

Always position and distribute the load evenly to avoid overloading individual axles. Ensure the load is secured correctly. Many people have been injured or even killed by the load they are carrying being thrown into the passenger compartment.

Legionella – new guidance issued

New guidance on Legionnaires disease has recently been issued on the [HR@Norfolk](#) intranet site. The guidance asks the following questions of managers in control of premises.

- Do you understand what Legionnaire's disease is, the possible routes of infection and the conditions in which Legionella bacteria may thrive?
- If you are not using NPS to manage water systems, has a 'Responsible Person' been identified?
- Has a Legionella risk assessment been carried out?
- Has a Legionella site logbook been created?
- Have remedial actions been taken to deal with any issues identified by the risk assessment?
- Do you have systems in place for monitoring water systems?
- Are you aware of work that is carried out on the water system(s) at your premises?
- Do you know what actions to take if a case of Legionnaire's disease is suspected or confirmed?

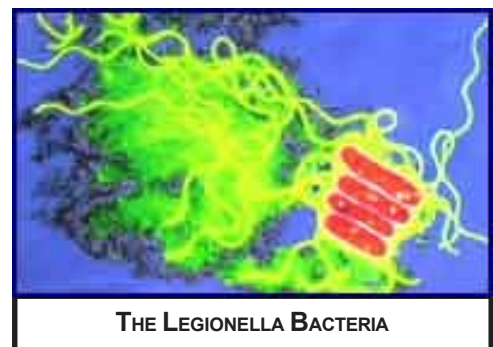
If you are a manager in control of a premises and are unsure about the answer to any of these questions, please read the 'Legionella Management - Guidance for Managers' guidance available from the [HR@Norfolk](#) intranet site.

Perspective

Despite lurid media headlines of multiple fatalities and prosecutions of managers for manslaughter, this is not an issue to panic about. Sensible site management procedures and an awareness of the risks should minimise any potential problems.

Premises managers training

Legionella will also be covered in the new premises managers training we mentioned in the last edition of Risk News. The first courses will now be delivered in October to coincide with this year's Health and Safety Week. The dates have yet to be set, but to express an interest in attending please contact your Departmental Safety Adviser. Details of the course content are available on the Risk and Insurance intranet site.



If you need this newsletter in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language, please contact the Helpline on 01603 223488 and we will do our best to help.



Risky business



Common Sense

Just to prove some judges do make the right decision:

Simonds vs Isle of Wight (2004) relates to a 5 year old child falling off a swing and breaking his arm. The court found that the council was not liable for the damage on the grounds that essentially a swing is a swing and does present an inherent and obvious risk. If a parent lets their child use a swing, they might get hurt.



Combating arson in schools

The Arson Prevention Bureau has recently issued new guidance for schools and school managers on how to prevent arson in schools. This short guide offers sensible advice on raising awareness, prevention and detection techniques. The guide is available on the Arson Prevention Bureau website at www.arsonpreventionbureau.org.uk

Towing trailers

Have you ever had to tow a trailer behind a minibus? It's not easy, is it!

Hitching, towing and manoeuvring trailers can potentially cause a number of problems, particularly if the driver is not familiar with the processes involved.

To assist with staff development and to help fulfill Health and Safety responsibilities, the Driver Development Team in Road Safety can offer a hitching and towing assessment / training session. This can either be included with a minibus session or as a stand alone module.

For further information call the Driver Development Team on 01603 223361.

Your shopping bill

According to Home Office figures, British shops lose £2.2bn a year from theft (by staff and customers) and criminal damage, and pay £600m on crime prevention. These costs are passed on to the customers; an average of £100 on each household's annual shopping bill!

Junk emails

If you receive unwanted emails, such as scams, junk mail, etc return a copy to the Internet Service Provider where the email came from.

If the email was received through Yahoo, for example, return it to abuse@yahoo.com or abuse@hotmail.com if it came via the hotmail route.

And finally . . .

More thoughts from David Brent

Process and procedure are the last hiding place of people without the wit and wisdom to do their job properly.

Eagles may soar high, but weasels don't get sucked into jet engines.

There's no 'I' in 'team'. But then there is no 'I' in 'useless smug colleague', either. And there's four in 'platitude-quoting idiot'. Go figure.